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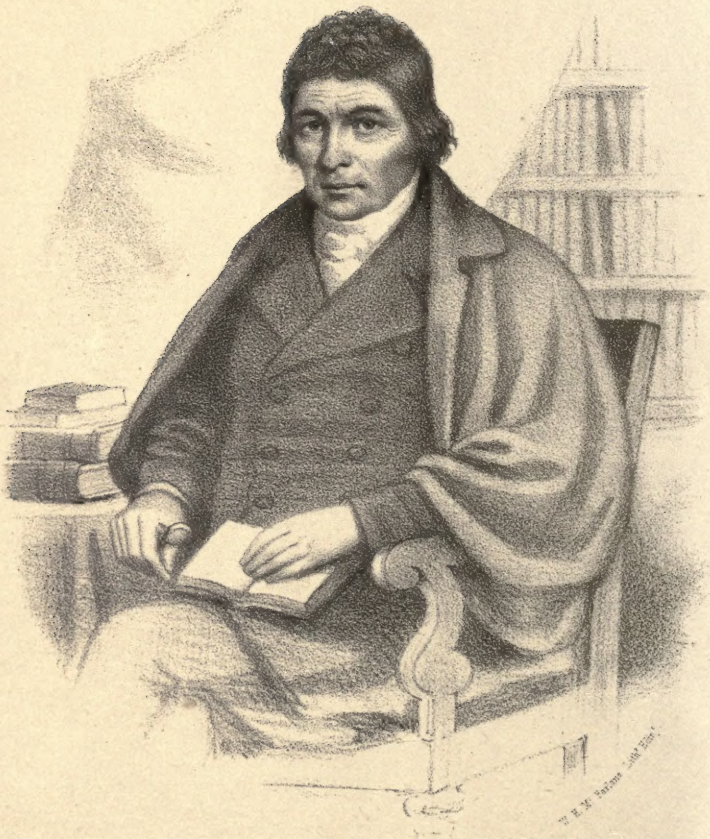
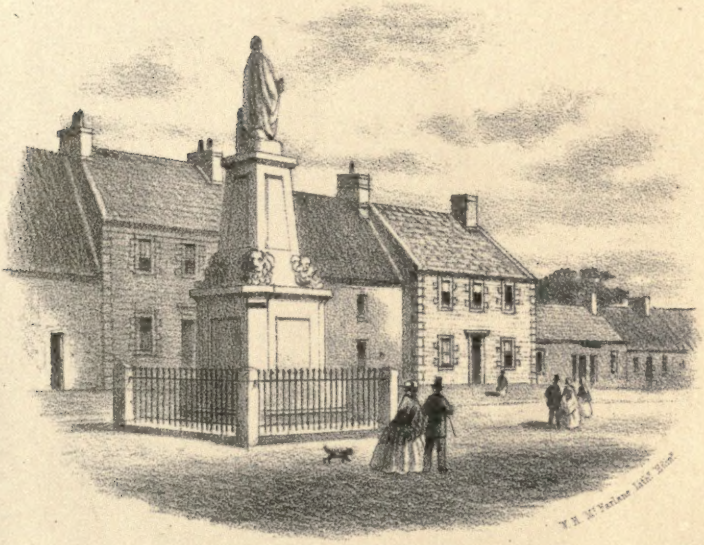


I am your affectionately
G. Lawson

The Life and Times of Dr. Lawson.



Dr. Lawson's Manse and Monument to Mungo Park.

Edinburgh

William Oliphant & Co.

John R Kay
Dec 31st 1861

THE

LIFE AND TIMES

OF

GEORGE LAWSON, D.D.,

SELKIRK,

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY TO THE ASSOCIATE SYNOD.

WITH

GLIMPSES OF SCOTTISH CHARACTER FROM 1720 TO 1820.

BY THE

REV. JOHN MACFARLANE, LL.D.

EDINBURGH: WILLIAM OLIPHANT AND CO.
LONDON: HAMILTON AND CO.

MDCCCLXII.

1862

MURRAY AND GIBB, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.

TO

THE REV. PROFESSOR HARPER, D.D.,

AND

THE SURVIVING MINISTERS

OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

WHO STUDIED THEOLOGY AT THE SELKIRK HALL,

IS INSCRIBED

THIS HUMBLE MEMORIAL

OF

THEIR GREATLY BELOVED

AND JUSTLY VENERATED TUTOR.

PREFACE.

'EDINBURGH, 17*th May*, 1848.

'To the Rev. GEORGE LAWSON.

'REV. AND DEAR SIR,—It has long been a subject of deep regret to us, in common, we believe, with many others, that the Church and the world, after the lapse of so many years, are yet unfurnished with anything like an adequate memorial of the very remarkable endowments and attainments, as a scholar, a Christian, a minister, and a theological tutor, of your late venerated father; and we fear that the period is not distant when the supply of the deficiency will become utterly impracticable. We are persuaded that such a work would meet with a most welcome reception, and are so impressed with the conviction that it would permanently conduce to the promotion of the highest interests not only of our own denomination, but of the Church of Christ in general, that we would feel as if guilty of neglect of duty, did we not employ the means in our power for gaining an object so desirable. We naturally look to you as, in many points of view, the person best qualified for executing such a work, and trust that we shall not look in vain. Should, however, there appear to you insurmountable obstacles in the way of your undertaking it, it is our unanimous opinion that measures should be adopted for prevailing on your neighbour and friend, the Rev. Dr Henderson, of Galashiels, who was so intimately acquainted with your father, and whose powers of biographical writing have been so satisfactorily proved, to

engage in this labour of love.—We are, Rev. and dear Sir, yours most truly,

'William Kidston, D.D.
John Jamieson, D.D.
John Brown, D.D.
Archibald Baird, D.D.
James Harper, D.D.
William Pringle, D.D.
John Newlands, D.D.
William Johnstone, D.D.
David Smith, D.D.
David Inglis.
David Stewart.
John Clapperton.
James Elles.
William Lee.
David M. Inglis.
Andrew Scott.
James Anderson.
Andrew Elliott.'

To this joint application, Mr Lawson, after considerable hesitation, yielded. He commenced to write his honoured father's memoir, but had only proceeded in it a few pages, when he was called suddenly to his own account. Other attempts were made to prevail upon Dr John Brown or Dr Henderson to undertake the duty, but without success. All hope of a memoir of the great and good Professor was then abandoned.

The history of the present effort is very simple. I was walking one morning on the Well Road at Moffat, in the autumn of 1859, with the Rev. Alexander Lowrie, of East Calder, and the Rev. John Lawson, of Selkirk (the Professor's grandson and successor). The subject of the memoir was broached, and, on Mr Lawson's promising to furnish the family documents and other papers, I consented, perhaps rashly, to undertake it. Since that time, the preparation of the present volume has been, during leisure hours, my careful and somewhat laborious work. I soon found out that I had undertaken a Herculean task, and, oftener than once, abandoned it as impracticable. The suitable materials were scanty, and had to be dug out of chaos and confusion. De Lawson kept no diary, so that the simple story of his life has been woven out of current traditions, and such letters as have

been recovered and with difficulty deciphered. From such materials, not easily collated, unconnected and loose, though in themselves precious, the compilation has grown into a considerable biography. Forty years ago, with living and lustrous memories crowding about the mind, the work might have been done with comparative ease. As it is, and with every wish to make the best use of the materials at my disposal, the reader will find in it huge chasms and wide gulfs that could not be bridged over. He may expect to look upon the detached and fractured columns of some great religious Parthenon, partly embedded beneath the sands of time, partly carried off by the spirits of the just men who were its high priests, and partly excavated only now by a somewhat trembling and feeble hand. The book, in short, is a kind of *resurrectionist.* It not only bids Lawson 'come forth,' but other graves are opened at that call: he could not be unswathed and re-exhibited alone; his friends and associates also arise to share with him in this tardy tribute to the memory of departed excellence. When the reader has read but a small way into this book, he will be satisfied that no other arrangement could have been more agreeable to the generous mind of Lawson himself. He was a man that refused flattery, and, as for praise, he neither coveted nor courted it. If, however, just praise was abroad at any rate, he was the very man to decline it, unless enjoyed with those whom he believed to be at least equally worthy of it with himself. In this way I have been enabled to do slender justice to some of the early worthies of the Secession Church, whose names we would not willingly let die. My chief concern, however, has been about Lawson, in the manipulation of whose memorials I have felt as if I were digging up the bones of some great mammoth, which must be interlaced with sinews and ligaments, clothed with flesh, animated with life, and moulded into characteristic likeness simply by the vitality of truth being made to breathe throughout the whole. While

making the freest and fullest use of authorities, I have not blemished the letterpress with many references or explanatory notes. I have much pleasure, however, in recording my obligations to those students of Dr Lawson and other friends who have communicated much valuable information—especially to the Revs. Dr M'Kerrow, Bridge of Teith; Dr Simpson, Sanquhar; Dr Pringle, Auchterarder; Dr M'Kelvie, Balgedie; John Johnstone, late of Glasgow; John Lawson, Selkirk; D. M. Inglis, Stockbridge; Thomas Adam, late of Peebles; Alexander Lowrie, East Calder; Peter Carruthers, Longtown; W. M. Taylor, Liverpool; John Haddin, Rothesay; and the late George Sandy, Gorebridge.

If any shall be disappointed with this work, let them be consoled with the hope, that some more discriminating and judicious limner may now be provoked to attempt, and enabled to achieve a better. Meanwhile, I feel thankful that this labour of love has been attempted by me. To have done even a moiety of justice to 'George Lawson' is worth having lived for.

Appearing, as this memoir does, so soon after the autobiographies of Drs Sommerville and Carlyle, though contemplated and begun before it was known that such MSS. were in existence, this Secession fragment presents a striking contrast. These autobiographies form one of the best indirect justifications of the Secession of 1734. And this imperfect memorial of the Secession worthies of these times, may help us to perceive the more clearly our obligations to the Head of the Church, for calling into being and service, at that period, a band of men, and a system of means, which have preserved evangelical religion in our land.

My apology for the occasional use of the 'ego' is, that I found it the easiest and most natural way of communicating certain pieces of information.

PARK GROVE, GLASGOW, *November* 1861.

CONTENTS.

THE LIFE OF DR LAWSON.

CHAPTER I.

THE YOUTH AND HIS PROMISE.

FORTY-TWO YEARS have well nigh gone since GEORGE LAWSON died. There has been, during that long interval, a general craving for some proper record of his remarkable life; but no one has come forth to undertake it. 'There is no remembrance,' saith the Preacher, 'of the wise more than of the fool;' and of the wicked man it is said, 'His light shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine.' Such, however, has not been the fate of his memory whose holy story is to be written upon these pages. He was not a fool in any sense, and no man ever lived who prayed more earnestly concerning the wicked, 'My soul, come not thou into their secret: unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united.' The 'spark of his fire' still shines. He lives in the admiring remembrances of multitudes. It is still true in his case, that 'the memory of the just is blessed;' and true this shall ever be, even though this effort to embalm that memory should fail. Thirsting for immortality, a heathen poet says, 'I shall not all die:' neither can the 'all' of a good man's life be eclipsed, though the dim and flickering light of tradition be its solitary lamp. In the case of George Lawson, 'tradition' is nearly the total of what avails us for illustrating his character. His contemporaries are dead, very few of his students remain, and the number of those who keep the sacred reminiscences is daily diminished.

Every just consideration, therefore, points to the present as 'the accepted time' for 'rendering honour to whom honour is due.' As some entranced limner seizes the setting of the golden sun to sketch the landscape, at that moment lighted up with rays still beautiful and glowing, though fast fading away—as filial reverence employs the artist to portray the parental face, while expressions that enshrine the past still play and sparkle amid the wrinkles of age, or as the Nestor of some old philosophy encircles it with the last halo of enthusiasm ere yet new theories are called to occupy the uppermost seats,—so would I avail myself of the 'traditions and commandments' that remain, to possess the Church with the simple, but touching and instructive narrative of the life of the Sage of Ettrick. That story I for the most part write as I have read it out of the friendships and recollections of deceased and surviving admirers. Dr Lawson was dead before I could be interested in such matters. I may have seen him, and sat on his knees, when he was wont to visit at my grandfather's or father's house, but I have no recollection of it, so that I cannot even say, 'Virgilium tantum vidi.' Yet I have lived so much among those circles where he was most intimately known, that I sometimes feel as if I had seen and known him too. Certainly none of his personal friends can exceed my admiration of a character, the salient points of which have been before my mind since I could think. Photographs taken from the living person are expected to be accurate, while copies from them, though slightly indistinct, may still be discernible likenesses. To the latter class this sketch of life and character properly belongs. It is but a copy, and even that not from the original. It reflects only the tinted but truthful impressions of undying memories.

George Lawson was born on the 13th March 1749. His birthplace was Boghouse, a small farm about two miles from the village of West Linton, Peeblesshire. As its name

imports, the surrounding scenery is neither beautiful nor sublime. You will find there neither towering rocks, nor waving forests, nor flowery meads, nor fairy dells—no, not even a heather-hill,—the country all about is just a '*bog*.' Pollok conceived and elaborated his immortal poem amid scenes equally bleak and uninspiring; the 'divine dreamer' wrote his allegory in the cell of a prison; and Milton dictated 'Paradise Lost' with sightless eye-balls. There need be no wonderment, then, that George Lawson should grow up and imbibe the spirit of future genius and greatness amid the Bœotian regions of such a clime. Talent and worthiness seem to be much more independent of external nature than even poetic or abstruse temperaments. Superior minds are always ascending from discouraging, if not repressive circumstances, while the luxurious and the lovely in society, in nature, or in art, rarely either foster or form the inceptive promises into sterling and striking characters. Be this as it may, Lawson's mind was originally more susceptible of impressions from the discipline of a Christian up-bringing, than from the adjuncts of scenery, or the provocations of proximate genius. He came up from the peasant tribe, the quarter from which the most of our Scotch churches derive their best preachers and writers. Some have traced what they are pleased to call the sternness of Presbyterian polity to the bleak and rugged surface of our land, the one being to some extent the creature, and bearing the complexion of the other. It is not so. Our religious views and church peculiarities are mainly produced from the national habit of appealing to the Word of God as our sole authority for everything appertaining to faith and practice, and have no more to do with physical aspects and conditions than the rise and progress of Christianity had to do with the mountains and deserts of Palestine. We are indebted for such specimens of Christian excellence as Lawson's life exhibits, to that conscientious and enlightened appreciation of God's Word for which 'the common people'

and middling classes in Scotland have been for centuries remarkable. The same thing is noticeable among the like classes in England—from this have sprung and prospered the churches of Nonconformity. Dissenters on both sides of the Tweed have, in consequence, found for themselves religious instruction in a way and manner best suited to their social position. Wealth and rank incline towards State-churchism, and seem to prefer that, in the matter of religion, others shall both think and pay for them. Apart from more sacred considerations, the mere political aspects of this question are worthy of the statesman's notice. Dissent—evangelical and patriotic—has 'per se' done the State good service. It has provided for the masses the sound religious education which underlies true loyalty. Nonconformity and patriotism have oftener than once in the history of our country been convertible terms. There was much both of truth and point in the reply which George III. once gave to one of the gardeners at Kew. The man was a Scotchman, and a member of Dr Waugh's church, Wells Street, London. The King asked him whether he attended church, and where. The gardener, in his reply, mentioned that Dr Waugh was in the habit of praying for his Majesty every Sabbath in the public services of religion. 'Indeed!' said the monarch, 'then he must surely be sincere, as I do not pay him for it.'

Charles Lawson and Margaret Noble, the parents of George Lawson, had neither rank nor riches, and ran no danger of incurring the satire of the lines—

> 'They who on noble ancestors enlarge
> Produce their debt instead of their discharge.'

They were placed in that happy medium which is considered most favourable to comfort and respectability. Charles, whose ancestors had resided in the parish of Traquair, in the eastern part of Tweeddale, tenanted the small farm at Boghouse, and afterwards removed to another of moderate extent,

called 'Hallmyre.' These farms adjoin each other, and both lie in the parish of Newlands. He carried on at the same time the trade of a carpenter, which was not unusual in those days, when neither the mode of farming nor the general size of farms required the constant attention of the tenant. He was particularly noted for his 'early rising,' being generally found at work by one o'clock in the morning. This implied another habit—retiring to rest at an early hour. Such, however, was the almost universal custom of that district, and, indeed, of almost all the rural parts of Scotland; and he was not in that respect peculiar. It was the unusual hour of commencing his daily employment that distinguished him among his neighbours. He was known sometimes to begin and complete the making of a plough ere the sun rose; but it must be recollected that the Scotch plough then was a very different implement from the improved one of our day: if not more simple in its construction, it was of coarse make and finish, and consequently could be much more expeditiously got ready for use.

Along with his wife, who was in several respects a remarkable woman, and of decided piety, Charles saw it to be his duty to connect himself with the Secession Church at West Linton, a small village lying at the foot of the Pentland Hills on the banks of the Lyne, which is a tributary of the Tweed. The congregation which had been formed there by the Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh assembled for some time among the mountains and glens of Baddinsgill, not far from the famous rock of Harbourscraig, where the Covenanters had hewn out a pulpit, from which, in the days of persecution, they had often preached the Gospel. Amidst these scenes, where our fathers had sought refuge from the violence and bloodthirstiness of their persecutors, the inhabitants of West Linton and the surrounding country who were attached to evangelical truth, upheld divine ordinances, in defiance of insult and oppression. At the first they were favoured with occasional visits

from the fathers and founders of the Secession Church. The famous Ralph Erskine, of Dunfermline, frequently preached to them. They were regularly formed into a congregation in 1737, five years after the Secession commenced; and in 1740 their first minister, the Rev. James Mair, was ordained. Soon after this their numbers were greatly increased, and out of no less than twenty-three of the adjacent parishes. They were a people distinguished for theological knowledge and pious zeal. With what has been called 'systematic divinity' they were familiar. They read and digested the works of Owen, Manton, Baxter, and Boston, the intellectual giants of a former age. and hence became so knowing and expert as to be called 'living bodies of divinity.' They had the habit of meeting at each others' houses on appointed evenings for the purpose of religious discussions, along with devotional exercises, when in support of their views, they quoted adroitly from their favourite authors. Such meetings were sometimes insensibly prolonged till the dawn of day. These, too, were the days in which they travelled great distances to be present at the dispensation of the Lord's Supper. On one occasion thirty-two members of the Linton church went all the way to Dunfermline to enjoy that ordinance. The savoury recollections of his ministrations to them in their early history as a church, would no doubt prove a strong attraction to the place where Ralph Erskine dispensed with such unction the word of life.

As Dr Lawson was brought up under the ministry of Mr Mair, and was considerably influenced in future life by his early teaching and example, it may be proper here to introduce a few notices concerning him. By all accounts he was a man of undoubted and ardent piety, which stimulated a sound judgment to work well in the cause of his Divine Master. He was a strict, though not what is called a 'hyper' Calvinist. He organized and consolidated an excellent congregation, and after thirty-four years of a faithful and efficient

ministry he 'fell asleep in Jesus.' 'He was frequently employed in private and public catechising. Every visit to Mr Mair, by any of his people, especially if young, was improved by him as an opportunity of questioning them on some religious topic. If they waited upon him to apply for membership, or baptism to their children, or even to request him to perform the marriage ceremony, they were subjected to a strict and lengthened theological examination. When he examined in districts of the congregation distant from the place of worship, his ministry was attended by his people in the district. The examination generally lasted the whole day. There was a forenoon examination, then an interval, and then an afternoon one. When he met with instances of ignorance, as he was a man of hot temper, his reproofs were often expressed not in very measured terms. He was accustomed to tell them that, if they did not increase in knowledge, he would send them back to the "Auld Kirk" (the Church of Scotland). Yet his reproofs, though often severe, were submitted to by his people, so firmly did they believe that he had their spiritual good at heart.'[1] Though Mr Mair seems to have been in all respects a 'quadratus homo,' a sterling character, the infirmity of a 'hot temper' cleaved to him. He was not always careful either to curb or stifle it. Dr Lawson, when a student, was often exposed to its ebullitions, which may account for the happy manner in which through life he imposed restraints upon his own. To generate disgust in their minds against drunkenness, the Spartans used to exhibit their slaves under its brutifying influence. Many an excellent virtue has been trained under similar influences. The calm and well-regulated temper of Lawson may have been studied under the unhappy hastiness of Mair. It is told that on one occasion, when the student was delivering a trial discourse before the Presbytery, his minister suddenly exclaimed, 'Be sententious; come to the point, man!' Mr Lawson was struck dumb and sat

[1] Address by Rev. Wm. Fleming, of West Calder.

down, as he could not then venture to abridge what he had carefully composed. He was desired, however, by the Presbytery to proceed, while Mr Pattison, of Edinburgh, remarked that 'they would be very happy to hear such another discourse from Mr Mair himself.' At another time, Mr Lawson had delivered what is called 'a critical discourse,' upon which Mr Mair animadverted with undue severity, especially upon the plan or method which had been adopted. In his defence, a member of Presbytery observed, that such was the very plan recommended by the Professor, Mr Brown, of Haddington. 'Do not tell me that,' replied Mr Mair; 'that is not the Gospel way of it. Mr Brown had no college lair; and as for George Lawson, he just wants to be singular that he may get himself a name.' Mr Mair had a man-servant, and they had frequent bickerings. At last the man resolved to quit Mr Mair's service, and told him so. 'Hout, man,' said the minister, 'what's making you think of that?' ''Deed, sir,' was the reply, 'to tell you the even down truth, your temper is so bad that I cannot bear it any longer.' 'Fie, man,' rejoined Mr Mair, 'I am sure you ken that it is nae sooner on than it's off again.' 'Weel a wat,' replied the servant, 'that's true; but then the evil is, that it's nae sooner *off* than it's *on* again.' But the most affecting instance of this unhappy temperament ends so touchingly, and so much to his credit, as to justify our giving it a place. The Rev. William Kidston, of Stow, had come to Linton to assist Mr Mair at the dispensation of the Supper, and was most cordially welcomed. He had not been long in the house when some unseemly explosion on Mr Mair's part took place; and this was succeeded by similar outbursts, so sudden, sharp, and causeless, as greatly to surprise the Stow minister. Mr Kidston, indeed, determined to leave the house and return home next morning. He retired to his apartment for the night. He was awakened by hearing a low, solemn, continued voice, as if from one in prayer. He listened. Houses were not then so compactly

built as now, and good men were probably more given to pray audibly. The voice was Mr Mair's. He was confessing and bitterly lamenting before God his sins, and particularly those of the preceding evening. He especially lamented the stumblingblock he must have cast in the way of his young brother; besought God that he might not mar his brother's edification and comfort; and that he himself might have grace to be more on his guard while the stranger was with him, and at all times. Though a man of great firmness, and not much given to the melting mood, Mr Kidston was so overcome as to lay aside all thoughts of leaving Linton. He remained and assisted with comfort. The late Dr Kidston, in telling this incident, repeated his father's words when adverting to it:—'The good man was dissolved into tears. I too shed tears when I thought of the deep contrition which had been so speedily discovered; for, if I had been in such a passion, it would have been a day before I could have prayed as he did. His outbreak and his prayer made me like him all the better.'

There was what is usually called '*a character*' in this worthy man's congregation, who not unfrequently tried a temper so very irritable. His name was Walter Jackson. He was a 'Sir Oracle' of his kind; and to his opinions, especially of the ministers' sermons, the people looked with considerable interest. He was, however, as such characters generally are, an unjustly severe critic, his taste being rather to find fault than to commend. He manifested his mind of the preacher by his attitudes in the pew. When pleased, which was seldom, he sat erect and looked the preacher in the face; when dissatisfied, he gradually turned round till his back was towards the pulpit. The late Dr Husband, of Dunfermline, was a popular preacher. His fame had reached West Linton; the people were on the tiptoe of expectation; and when he did come and preach, they were all delighted; but they 'held their peace' till Walter's judgment was known. He listened

attentively for a while, but, to the surprise of the congregation, he gradually turned his back upon him. The Doctor himself noticed it, and afterwards facetiously remarked, that the man's behaviour told that in his estimation 'the preaching was no great thing, and that, after all, there was in it a great deal more whistling than red-land.' The prayers of even godly men at that time were very long and heavy, comprehending sometimes a system of divinity. Jackson was notorious for length. He was attending a funeral at Hallmyre. The company had assembled in the barn to get some refreshment, and, having partaken, he was asked to return thanks. He commenced in right good earnest with the fall of Adam, and was going down from one great Bible doctrine to another, till patience was exhausted. Significant looks passed among the mourners; one by one they deserted the barn, and the funeral procession started for Newlands churchyard. When Walter came to a close, and opened his eyes, he found himself alone, and on inquiry discovered that the procession was fully a mile on its way. His conceited soul was chafed.

By means of a small patrimony, as well as by industrious and frugal habits, Charles Lawson brought up in comfort a family of six sons and two daughters. He enjoyed a high reputation for intelligence, prudence, piety, and activity, and was chosen and ordained to the office of the ruling eldership—an office which he held with unimpeached character till his death. Two of his sons studied for the ministry,—George, the eldest, and John, the second of the family. The latter, however, was thrown into delicate health by a fever, and relinquished his studies. He seems to have been a young man of piety and promise, and was often remembered by his elder brother with sincere regret. There is but one relic of this interesting lad, which some will feel to be alike curious and suggestive as an illustration of manners in those days. We refer to an extract from a letter of his to his brother George. Its date, and the circumstances to which it refers, are some

years posterior to Lawson's settlement in Selkirk, but this seems the proper place for inserting it:—

'HALLMYRE, *March* 28, 1774.

'DEAR BROTHER,—I am in no better a state of health than when you left this place, notwithstanding of having applied to Mr Reid, of Peebles. Some of the rest of our folks are but in an indifferent state of health at this time also; but we must be submissive to God's will of providence concerning us.

'I went on Wednesday to the auction of Mr Mair's library; and after a sermon by Mr Brown, he and John Mossman cried by turns. I bought for you Hopkins' works at seven shillings, and Boston's three volumes on the Catechism at nine and sixpence.[1] The books, for the most part, sold above value. Mr John Scott bought Manton's works at one pound; but then they wanted the half of the second volume, and some of the volumes were in a bad order. I bought a folio copy of Jenkin on Jude, not very good in case, at five and sixpence.—From your loving brother,

'JOHN LAWSON.

P.S.—Mr Scott bought also Poole's Synopsis, about one guinea.'

In this letter we have a curious picture. It must have been customary then, or there, to precede an auction of books, especially of a minister's books, by a sermon. The minister present must also have taken a share in 'crying,' or managing the sale. The Mr Brown that on this occasion 'cried' with John Mossman, is very likely to have been the celebrated Professor in Haddington.

George Lawson, the subject of this memoir, seems from his childhood to have manifested not a few of those peculiarities for which in after life he became remarkable. He

[1] These books are still in Dr Lawson's library at Selkirk.

was somewhat infirm in bodily constitution, and was therefore an object of unusual parental care. Disappointed in their wishes with regard to John, they were the more anxious (as many Scotch parents in similar circumstances have been, are now, and, it is hoped, will long continue to be) to have at least one of their sons a minister of the New Testament. At an early period of life, George had been seized with small-pox of a very malignant character. In his case it was expected to be fatal. Having dedicated him to God in baptism, Charles Lawson and his wife were now prepared to surrender him in death. All hope of recovery for a time had gone, and the bitterness of realizing a first bereavement was well nigh over, when it pleased God to answer their prayers and restore their son, as if from the dead. We see now for what reason this mercy was granted —not for their joy alone, but for the glory of God and the edification of the Church. The disease, however, left upon him obvious marks of its severity, together with a weakness in his eyes from which he never fully recovered, and which frequently rendered it difficult and painful, in some instances impossible, for him either to read or to write. In other respects he acquired, and long retained, a comfortable measure of health. The affliction, however, in his eyes was a continual remembrancer to him of what God in his childhood had wrought for him. It was, moreover, a kind of 'thorn in the flesh' left, 'lest he should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations;' and often disposed him to moralize on the subject, both for his own and the good of others. Many years after, he wrote a most interesting letter upon the subject to a friend similarly afflicted. This most apostolic document was printed after his death in the denominational Magazine.

The discrimination of Charles Lawson, and the partiality of his wife, were not slow to accord to their son the preference which his precocity claimed. It was quite apparent

that the boy was, according to the parlance of these days, 'out of the ordinary.' His thirst for knowledge was intense; his capacity for receiving it was great; his diligence and application were unremitting. At the same time, he evinced a total indifference, or rather an utter aversion, to any mechanical employment or trade. If he could not have his books, he at once manifested disaffection. He indicated little or no aptitude for occupations generally assigned to boys residing on a farm, of which the following is a somewhat amusing instance. He had been sent on one occasion by his father to Goldie's Mill, about a mile from Hallmyre, with a sack of grain, to be ground into meal for the family, as was then customary. The sack was laid upon a horse, which George was instructed to lead by a halter. He proceeded along the road, never doubting that the animal was following him, but all the while poring over the pages of a book, or pursuing some train of thought. The horse, however, had contrived to free himself from the halter, and George arrived at the mill without either horse or sack, to the astonishment of the worthy miller, who predicted that much good could never come of a youth so thoughtless alike of man and beast. The horse was found quietly grazing by the wayside, not far from his father's house.

On another occasion he was sent to fasten a cow with what was called a 'tether,' in a field of grass. There was an unfenced field of growing corn quite adjacent, and George was ordered so to 'tether' the cow as to keep it clear of the corn. According to the old proverb, 'one can only go the length of his tether.' It did not occur to him, however, that the animal could 'complete the circle.' He thrust down the tether-stick into the pasture ground, but on the very edge of the corn-field. The cow preferred the more substantial article; and while the herd was devouring his book, she devoured the grain.

These little incidents are given simply as early specimens

of that absence of mind about worldly matters, of which he never could entirely divest himself. It may be proper here to notice, that some alleged specimens of a similar or of a more glaring kind have been greatly exaggerated in the report, while others are entirely false. It was quite clear, however, that his nature was alike indisposed and incapacitated for minute attention to merely secular matters; and his parents had the good sense to consult this peculiarity, and afford him all proper opportunity for gratifying his thirst after knowledge. Previous to their deciding the weighty matter of his future in life, Charles Lawson and his wife considered it respectful to their minister to take him into their counsels, and be guided by his superior wisdom. They, accordingly, one day got their son put in order, and took him with them to the manse. Mr Mair listened with apparent interest to their views and proposals as to their getting a tutor for him, and thereafter sending him to college. George himself, somewhat abashed in such a presence, had edged himself into the window recess, and, whether from absence of mind or affected indifference, occupied himself by writing with his finger upon one of the panes of glass. He was, however, suddenly called to his senses by hearing Mr Mair, in a rather angry tone, thus address his father: 'I tell thee, man, he has no mother-wit. If a man want lair, he may get that; and if he want riches, he may get them; and even if he want grace, he may get it; but if a man want common sense, I tell thee, man, he will never get that.' It is just to Mr Mair to add, that it was not long after this before he discerned the precocity and attainments of young Lawson, and took great pleasure in leading and pressing him forward in his education. Such encouragement was needed during his whole curriculum; for, though of pregnant genius, diligent application, and rare advancement in literary, philosophical, and theological studies, he alone seemed unaware of it all, and would have held back in his course but for the

stimuli employed upon him by others. Nothing was lacking either on the part of his parents. They educated him according to their circumstances; and his progress was alike easy and rapid.

The late Rev. John Johnstone, of Ecclefechan, was for a time classical tutor to George Lawson; and fortunate, indeed, for the future scholar was it that such a teacher was then at West Linton. Mr Johnstone laid the foundations in young Lawson's mind of that mass of learning which has made him a wonder to many. He was a student of theology under Professor Brown, of Haddington, and occupied his time during the recess by teaching. He was an excellent scholar, and in every respect well qualified to elevate the classical tastes of his pupil, and to give them a direction towards those sacred offices upon which, in after life, they were to be employed. It is due to the memory of this most excellent man, that we embalm it thus in the biography of his distinguished pupil. Dr Lawson invariably spoke of him in terms of almost enthusiastic veneration; and not unfrequently, in his lectures at the Selkirk Hall, was this early teacher referred to as one of the most accomplished of men, and one of the best specimens of a Christian minister. The late Dr Beattie, of Glasgow, who was a native of Ecclefechan, and brought up under Mr Johnstone's ministry, often spoke of him in similar terms; and to some it may be perhaps more interesting to be told, that one of the most remarkable writers of the day, Thomas Carlyle, was also born and brought up in early life under the ministry of the Secession minister of Ecclefechan. It is not the least creditable specimen of Mr Carlyle's good sense and good feeling, that he still remembers the guide and instructor of his youth. We have heard that he has oftener than once declared, 'I have seen many capped and equipped bishops, and other episcopal dignitaries; but I have never seen one who more beautifully combined in himself the Christian and the Christian gentleman than did Mr Johnstone.'

This is gratifying testimony. It prompts the prayer, that ere life's fitful fever is past, the memories of that Gospel which he heard from his honoured Scotch pastor may return with mighty and merciful effect upon a mind, sometimes erring, but ever, we fondly hope, steadily going onward and upward to its God and Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Mr Johnstone was for fifty-two years the minister of Ecclefechan Secession Church, and died in 1812, eighty-two years of age. 'Endowed with strong natural talents (says the epitaph on his monument), which were cultivated by a liberal education, and sanctified by divine influence, he was as a scholar respectable, as a theologian learned, and as a minister able, faithful, and laborious. His unaffected piety, unspotted morals, habitual cheerfulness, and dignified manners awed the vicious, edified the saints, and excited a sentiment of universal esteem and veneration. Having, through the course of a long ministry, fully declared the whole counsel of God, and strikingly exemplified its holy and elevating influence on his temper and conduct, he closed a life of useful labour by a death full of comfort and hope.' It remains to be told, that when Mr Johnstone completed his theological term, he left to undergo trials for license, and consequently did not resume his vocation at West Linton. Thus preceptor and pupil were parted; and with mutual regret. It is said that the whole family of Lawsons were afflicted, and that young George especially wept for days thereafter. Many years afterwards, and when his pupil had been elevated to the Chair of Divinity, the Ecclefechan minister sent his son to the Selkirk Hall.[1] When the youth presented the usual certificate from his father as moderator of the session, Dr Lawson shook him kindly by the hand, saying, 'There is a woe, my young man, pronounced against your father.' The son looked somewhat

[1] Afterwards the Rev. John Johnstone, first of St Andrews, and latterly of Glasgow,—the only surviving son and the inheritor of many of the gifts and graces of his father.

surprised; but the Professor put all right by adding, 'All men speak well of him.'

The time came when the boy-student at Hallmyre must quit, for the first time, the parental roof. He was now ready for college, and was matriculated at fifteen years of age as an alumnus of the University of Edinburgh. The University at that period was under the principalship of the celebrated historian, Dr Robertson. During the preliminary sessions, he attended Professors George Stewart for Humanity, Hunter for Greek, Stevenson for Logic, Mathew Stewart for Mathematics, Ferguson for Moral Philosophy, Russell for Natural Philosophy, and James Robertson, the author of the 'Clavis,' for Hebrew. He made good use of his opportunities, being a diligent and successful, if not a distinguished student. He returned to his humble home in Peeblesshire during each recess, employing his time in diligent preparation for the following session. Life in Edinburgh was to him nothing more than a continuation of his intellectual labours and researches in the retirement of the farm-house. He mingled very little with society, and indulged in none of the amusements or frolics which have sometimes made student-life in the city a sad caricature, if not sometimes a disastrous tragedy. The grace of God, that had been given to him in childhood, encompassed him as a shield, and carried him comparatively innocent through an ordeal equally trying to genius and piety. It is sad to think of the number of hopeful youths, especially of such as come from the holier shelters of rural life into the city, who regularly fall victims to the seductions which meet them on every side. On the shores of the academic curriculum may be seen the blanched bones of many young and promising hopes, which, under happier stars, might have been beautifully developed into every variety of useful and Christian life. When we think of the exceeding simplicity and unsuspecting nature of Lawson, we marvel that he rode out that first voyage of worldly experience so skilfully

and so unharmed. No doubt he owed much of his safety to the holy training and example of his patriarchal home, but above all to the influence of godly principles, and the sufficiency of godly grace.

From his studious and retiring habits, George made but few acquaintances and still fewer friendships at college; but such as he did form were of a choice description. Some of these are too famous to be overlooked in this sketch of his life, and others of them must occupy such a prominent place in it as to warrant our assignment to them of special notices. We refer, among others, to Michael Bruce, William Dryburgh, John Logan, George Henderson, David Greig, and Andrew Swanston.

Michael Bruce has been long and favourably known as the poet of Lochleven, and the author of a few of the most beautiful lyrics in our language, especially the 'Ode to Spring,' and the 'Hymn to the Cuckoo.' 'I have often' (writes one of Dr Lawson's daughters) 'heard my father refer to Bruce. Indeed, his early days and youthful associates were subjects in which he took great delight. He cherished the memory of Bruce with the deepest veneration and ardent affection, on account of his fervent piety, amiable disposition, and true genius.' He was born at Kinnesswood, a small village in the parish of Portmoak, of which the celebrated Ebenezer Erskine was minister previous to his translation to Stirling. For Michael's as well as for Ebenezer's sake, many visit this village and its churchyard, which are situated on the north-east banks of Lochleven amid the sunny slopes of the Lomond Hills. The thatched cottage in which the poet was born still remains. His parents were very poor, and had to hire out their children to herd cattle on the Lomond Hills. For six successive summers was the young poet thus employed. On these hills, however, he did more than feed the flocks of others: he fed his own ardent mind with the ideas of sub-

limity and beauty which the grandeur of the surrounding scenery called forth,—even thus early he looked round on nature and on life with the eye which nature bestows only on a poet. Dr Mackelvie, his accomplished biographer, says that 'his poem on "Lochleven" is wholly made up of these reminiscences, and ought to be regarded by the reader as the impressions of the shepherd-boy clothed in the language of the student and of the scholar.' By the use of such means as he could command, he studied hard, and actually qualified himself for entering the college at an unusually early period of life. At this juncture his father received intimation that he had fallen heir to a small legacy of 200 merks Scots.[1] It was at once determined to send Bruce to Edinburgh, where, by dint of saving and borrowing, his father was enabled to keep him till he finished the required sessions. The following extract from one of his letters proves that he was often in most straitened circumstances:—'I daily meet with proofs that money is a necessary evil. When in an auction, I often say to myself, How happy should I be if I had money to purchase such a book! How well should my library be furnished, "nisi obstat res angusta domi!"

> "My lot forbids, nor circumscribes alone
> My growing virtues, but my crimes confine."

Whether any virtues would have accompanied me in a more elevated station is uncertain; but that a number of vices, of which my sphere is incapable, would have been its attendants, is unquestionable.' Having left college, Bruce became a teacher at Gairney Bridge, near Kinross, the place where the four ministers that seceded from the Church of Scotland in 1732 met and formed themselves into the first Associate Presbytery. To assist his finances, he here determined to publish a volume of his poems, but declining health prevented him. His friend Lawson had heard of his purpose, and thus alludes to it in a letter which he wrote to him from Boghouse

[1] About L.11, 2s. 2⅔d.

in February 1766:—'Pray inform me when Mr Swanston proposes to begin his course of lectures, and whether you design to attend them. I would have been glad to have seen your criticism on Moir's pamphlet, or *some of your new compositions, unless so large that they cannot be conveyed.*' Having attended one session at the Divinity Hall in Kinross, Bruce removed to another school, fifteen miles to the west of that town. The place was called Forrest Mill. There was nothing here attractive in the scenes of nature. He consequently fell back upon his memories of Lochleven, and composed the poem of that name, which is so much admired by the lovers of a poet's holiest and sweetest musings. By this time consumption had begun its ravages in his frail body, which compelled him to return home. The hope of recovery soon died within him, as is but too mournfully indicated in these lines from his matchless lyric, the '*Ode to Spring:*'—

'Now Spring returns, but not to me returns
The vernal joy my better years have known;
Dim in my breast life's dying taper burns,
And all the joys of life with health are flown.

'Starting and shivering in the inconstant wind,
Meagre and pale, the ghost of what I was;
Beneath some blasted tree I lie reclined,
And count the silent moments as they pass—

'The winged moments, whose unstaying speed
No art can stop, or in their course arrest;
Whose flight shall shortly count me with the dead,
And lay me down in peace with those that rest.'

About this time he received a visit from his friend Lawson. He was in bed, 'his countenance pale as death, while his eyes shone like lamps in a sepulchre.' The interview was short but deeply affecting, as their souls had been knit to one another in love.

'I am happy to see you so cheerful,' said Lawson.

'Why should not a man be cheerful on the verge of heaven?' said the dying poet.

'But,' said Lawson, 'you look so emaciated, I am afraid you cannot last long.'

'You remind me,' was the reply, 'of the story of the sailor whose ship was wrecked, and who, when told that the vessel was sinking, replied, "Let it sink, it is not mine." I say with the sailor, Let my body fall, it is not mine.'

Very soon after this he died, in the twenty-first year of his age. His Bible was found upon his pillow, marked down at Jeremiah xxii. 10, 'Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him;' and on the blank leaf this verse was written,

> 'Tis very vain for me to boast
> How small a price my Bible cost:
> The Day of Judgment will make clear
> 'Twas very cheap, or very dear.'

An edition of his poems was soon afterwards published, but justice was never done to this truly amiable youth till his life was written and his fine poetic genius was described by Dr Mackelvie of Balgedie. The above notices are taken from that touching and elegant work, wherein also will be found a most successful and masterly defence of Bruce against the pilferings of Logan.[1]

Of William Dryburgh Dr Mackelvie has thus beautifully written:—'Like Bruce, he was a youth of extraordinary piety, and, alas! like him also, a youth of consumptive habit. Both of them had a presentiment that they were to drop into a premature grave; and the probable brevity of their mortal existence, and their delightful hopes of a glorious immortality, were the frequent subjects of their conversation and correspondence. As pilgrims, soon to make their exit from this

[1] See Lochleven and other Poems, by Michael Bruce; with a Life of the Author from original sources, by the Rev. Wm. Mackelvie, D.D. 1837.

world, and as heirs together of the grace of life, they were drawn towards each other by sympathies and regards such as none but pious minds can feel. Their presentiment was confirmed by the events: Dryburgh died in his eighteenth year, and Bruce followed him to the grave in less than a year after. How keenly our poet felt the death of his friend, is evinced by a letter which he addressed to Pearson upon receiving the intelligence of the event. 'I have not many friends,' says he, 'but I love them well. Death has been among the few I have; poor Dryburgh! but he is happy. I expected to have been his companion through life, and that we should have stepped into the grave together; but Heaven has seen meet to dispose of him otherwise. What think you of this world? I think it very little worth. You and I have not a great deal to make us fond of it; and yet, I would not exchange my condition with any unfeeling fool in the universe, if I were to have his dull hard heart into the bargain. Farewell, my rival in immortal hope! my companion, I trust, for eternity! Though far distant, I take thee to my heart; souls suffer no separation from the obstruction of matter or distance of place. Oceans may roll between us, and climates interpose in vain—the whole material creation is no bar to the winged mind. Farewell! through boundless ages fare thee well. Mayest thou shine when the sun is darkened! Mayest thou live in triumph when time expires. It is at least possible we may meet no more in this foreign land, this gloomy apartment in the universe of God; but there is a better world, in which we may meet to part no more. Adieu.'

John Logan was only for a short period the associate of Lawson and his friends during their studies in Edinburgh. Having become tutor in Sir John Sinclair's family by the recommendation of Dr Blair, the Professor of Rhetoric in the University, he manifested symptoms of backsliding, and in the end joined the Established Church. He became the minister

of the second charge of South Leith, which, after twelve years, he resigned, retired to London, and died in 1788. In a letter from one of the Selkirk family to Dr Mackelvie it is said, 'Logan was one of my father's companions at college; but, so far from encouraging an intimacy with him, he rather kept aloof from him. Though a man of true genius, his fellow-students did not look upon him as an exemplary or religious character.' For a time, it seems he had exercised an undue influence over Bruce and Lawson, when intimate intercourse was broken up by a simple circumstance. Logan had induced them to accompany him in a walk into the country on a Sabbath afternoon, and, to amuse himself, commenced to throw stones at the walls or trees which skirted the highway. They remonstrated in vain. After this they seldom met. When the elder Bruce decided to publish his son's poems, he went to Leith and entrusted the precious manuscripts with Logan, who undertook to edit the volume. Dr Mackelvie has proved that several poems, afterwards published by Logan as his own, were Bruce's; and especially some of the most beautiful of the paraphrases of Scripture which are sung in public worship by the Scottish churches, and which Logan had submitted to the General Assembly as his own composition.[1]

George Henderson was the son of the proprietor of Turfhills (an estate near Kinross). He and Lawson were fellow-students all through their classical and theological career. Their friendship was ardent and uninterrupted. Soon after his license, Mr Henderson was called and ordained to be the assistant and successor of the Rev. Mr Fisher, of Glasgow, one of '*the four*' seceding fathers, and whose Catechism has preserved his name and memory in all the gates of the Church. This promising young minister, like the other companions of Lawson, was soon and suddenly cut off in the midst of his

[1] Paraphrases 8th 11th, and 18th.

usefulness. He preached in his usual health on Sabbath, and died on the Thursday following, in the thirty-sixth year of his age and fourteenth of his ministry. It is to him that Bruce alludes in these lines:—

> 'Nor shall the muse forget thy friendly heart,
> O Lælius! partner of my youthful hours.
> How often, rising from the bed of peace,
> We would walk forth to meet the summer morn,
> Inhaling health and harmony of mind;
> Philosophers and friends; while science beamed
> With ray divine, as lovely on our minds
> As yonder orient sun, whose welcome light
> Revealed the vernal landscape to the view.
> Yet, oft unbending from more serious thought,
> Much of the looser follies of mankind,
> Humorous and gay, we'd talk, and much would laugh;
> While ever and anon, their foibles vain
> Imagination offered to our view.'

Of David Greig and Andrew Swanston, the two best beloved of young Lawson's early companions, we shall have to speak frequently, and at some length, in future pages. We therefore pass on in our narrative with this single remark, that these college friendships were never forgotten by him; their memories and influences remained upon him through life; and with one of them especially—David Greig—he maintained for more than fifty years the closest and most endearing fellowship. Our youthful companionships bulk largely in our education. They are indeed elements for good or evil in the formative period, and have in many instances decided both the moral and mental future of the man. They may not be 'wiser than all our teachers,' but they often speak with more authority. It is said that sometimes the boy is father to the man—the companions of the boy very often are—they make him. So true is this, that in many cases you may forecast the horologue of a youth from the associates whom he prefers. In their manifestation of character you see the bias of his

own; while in the influences they exert upon him you see what for him are to be the powers of the world about to be entered. As we proceed with the life of George Lawson, it will become apparent that in Bruce, Henderson, Swanston, and Greig, he found congenial spirits—they were alike in literary and religious tastes. With no pretension to poetic genius, Lawson had a soul that lifted itself up to the sublime and beautiful, whether in the regions of thought or of nature. He could not have written the 'Hymn to the Cuckoo,' or the 'Ode to Spring,' but he had a most sympathetic appreciation of their poetic excellence; and that love of retirement, when the beauties of nature lead the soul to nature's God, was as strong an ingredient in him as in the gifted bard of Lochleven. In his attachment to Greig especially, we shall perceive Lawson's harmony with the deep and holy musings of a grave theologian, and the blissful outgoings of as warm a heart as ever beat in man. From his earliest days Greig was serious in his religious studies, and in earnest applied himself to become a 'workman that needeth not to be ashamed.' Hence sprung up between them a love—a friendship like that of Jonathan to David; and hence also their joint separation from Logan when they discovered his levity, if not his irreligion.

The time had now come when Lawson must bid adieu to college life, and enter upon the more solid and still more important study of theology. Having fulfilled his sessions at Edinburgh, he was examined by his Presbytery, found qualified, and certificated to the Divinity Hall in the autumn of 1766.

The Hall at that period was under the Professorship of the Rev. John Swanston, of Kinross. Mr Fisher, his predecessor in the Chair, had about two years before that resigned his office, after having presided over the seminary for fifteen years. The choice of Mr Swanston by the Synod is proof of the high estimate in which his classical and theological attainments were held. The text-book of his class was the Medulla

of Mark, and his lectures embraced the entire subjects of orthodox divinity. He was much loved and respected by his students, and was almost idolized by his congregation. 'Mr Swanston,' said one of them, 'is almost like a god amongst us.' Scarcely, however, had he got his prelections on theology into something like method and order, when he was suddenly cut down by the stroke of death. He had gone to assist at the dispensation of the Lord's Supper in Perth, where he was seized by violent and rapid inflammation, and died before he could be removed to his own house. Death, however, did not take him by surprise. He had not a Saviour to seek in that last and awful hour; from his earliest days he had 'found Him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write.' Just before he expired he said, 'I believe that, through the grace of our Lord Jesus, I shall be saved. I shall not die, but live in the highest sense, and hope to declare the works of the Lord eternally.' His latest words were, 'I would not now return to life for ten thousand worlds; for, though my heart and my flesh fail me, God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.' He fell asleep in Jesus in the forty-sixth year of his age, the nineteenth of his ministry, and the third year of his professorship. A worthy witness thus testifies concerning him: 'He was possessed of singular natural parts; being furnished with a quick discernment, great strength of memory and judgment, and with rich invention. Such was his modesty, that on every occasion he rather concealed than showed his abilities, unless when necessarily engaged in the defence of truth.' The only work he has left is a posthumous volume of sermons, edited by the Rev. John Smith, of Dunfermline. These sermons are of high merit; too multifarious, perhaps, in their divisions, as most of the sermons of that day were, but abounding in savoury and massive truths, and with not a few specimens of fanciful and ingenious illustration.

When George Lawson entered the Hall at Kinross, this

excellent man was in the third and last year of his professorship. Still, though he only enjoyed that one session of his first theological tutor, he carried the remembrance of it to his grave. It was under Swanston that he received his first impulses to the study of the deep things of God; and it was at Kinross that he confirmed some of those valuable friendships which, we doubt not, have survived death. In many ways his residence on the banks of Lochleven was propitious to him. The scenery formed a fine contrast to that of Boghouse; and the associations of the locality with the misfortunes of Queen Mary on the one hand, and the rise and progress of the Church he loved on the other, were refreshing and suggestive to a mind now beginning to think and decide for itself on all important subjects, secular and sacred. Amid the ruins

> 'Of Lochleven Castle, famous once,
> The abode of heroes of the Bruce's line,'

he could meditate on the crimes and sorrows of queens and potentates, and turn them, as he did, to good account in the future lessons of the Christian ministry; while his visits to the neighbouring hamlet of Gairney Bridge would strengthen his attachments to the noble cause which was there accomplished and consecrated by the sacrifices, the prayers, the judgment, and the faith of our fathers. But, in addition, he was privileged to enjoy at Kinross the society of his most cherished companions. On the same bench sat Lawson, Bruce, Henderson, Andrew Swanston (son of the Professor), and David Greig. Together they read, studied, prayed, hoped, believed. Lawson was kindly received into the hospitable mansion of Lethangie, where he remained during the session. David Greig was the son of its excellent proprietor, and had invited his friend to abide there when he should come to the Hall. This tended greatly to the increase of their mutual love and confidence. The domain of Lethangie lies about a mile to the north of Kinross, upon the banks of

Lochleven, so that the students were frequently entertained within its pious walls. The worthy 'laird' himself might not be able to supply their ardent and lively minds with much of the intellectual or scientific, but they found him adept enough at 'the most excellent knowledge' of Jesus Christ; while his admirable son and young Lawson carried the vintage of their learning into the 'feasts of reason.' Besides, the paternal residence of George Henderson was not much farther from Kinross than Lethangie, and to it also they were often and most heartily welcomed. Turfhills, the name of Mr Henderson's estate, lies about a mile to the east of the town. During his attendance at the Hall, Michael Bruce was invited to reside there; so that in either mansion George Lawson had a choice friend and highly respectable acquaintances, intercourse with whom, during the session, greatly contributed to his comfort and improvement. With Greig in Lethangy, Andrew Swanston in the Manse, and Bruce and 'Lelius' in Turfhills, the carpenter's son was truly happy. Short-lived, however, were these, as are all mundane joys. The sessions of the Hall, then as now, extended through the months of August and September. The Professor took farewell of the students as usual, and all departed in the fond hope that they should meet again on the shores of that beautiful lake, whose melancholy waves chant a dirge over Scotland's most beautiful Queen. Ere a few months had passed, their honoured teacher was dead; and a new appointment to the Chair carried the Hall into another quarter of the country. Bruce himself died only a few weeks after Mr Swanston. After this, however, Lawson and Greig often exchanged visits, which made Lethangie and Boghouse in after years hallowed spots in the recollections of both. We have not been able to discover any relics of their correspondence during their student-life; but it is said that, along with Swanston and George Henderson, a very intimate and cordial intercourse was maintained

The Rev. John Brown, of Haddington, was chosen by the Synod to succeed Mr Swanston in the chair of Theology. It is not easy to write or speak of this remarkable man in anything like measured terms. He was a marvel in the Church of Christ. Born in a lowly condition of life, he reached the highest posts of honour that can be held in this world—a minister of the Cross, and a president in the schools of the prophets. Without the ordinary advantages of a sound classical and philosophical education, he became a most learned divine and an extensive author. Few names are better known, or more profoundly venerated, than that of the author of the 'Self-Interpreting Bible.' His early thirst for knowledge could never be satiated. Dr M'Kerrow tells us that he 'took delight in committing to memory the catechisms of Vincent, Flavel, and the Westminster Assembly. He acquired, by dint of study, a knowledge of the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages; and in process of time, such was his literary attainments, that he could read and translate the French, Italian, Dutch, German, also the Arabic, Persic, Syriac, and Ethiopic. The facility with which he acquired the knowledge of languages gave occasion to some to say, that he had Satan for his instructor.' Before Michael Bruce was born, he had kept a school at Gairney Bridge. At that time he went down every Sabbath to hear Ralph Erskine at Dunfermline. 'I can never forget,' he said, 'those days when I travelled over the hills of Cleish to hear that great man of God, whose sermons, I thought, were brought home by the Spirit of God to my heart. At these times I thought I met with the God of Israel, and saw Him face to face.' He was ordained in Haddington in 1750. He became Professor of Divinity in 1767, and died in 1787. His last words were—'My Christ.' As the theological views of Dr Lawson were very much formed upon those of Professor Brown, and as the Selkirk system was modelled upon that prosecuted at Haddington, the following graphic account of the latter, by the

late venerable Dr Peddie, of Edinburgh, will be read with interest:—

'At the distance of sixty years, it cannot be supposed that my recollections can be very minute, or, perhaps, very accurate. I do recollect that, in ordinary days, we had just one meeting—but of considerable length—from ten in the forenoon, to twelve, or, perhaps, even one o'clock. The meeting was begun and ended with prayer,—a service which was conducted by the Professor, and the students in the order of the roll. It was occupied in an examination on a section or part of a section of the system, which had been composed by the Professor himself, and manuscript copies of which were in the hands of the students, till, to avoid the inconvenience of several students having only one copy for their joint use, it was printed. The text of the system was supported by a profusion of texts of Scripture, which the students had to quote *memoriter* as nearly as possible in the precise words.

'Mr Brown never delivered, during the five years that I attended the Hall, even one lecture on any head of Divinity. Anything that can be called lectures was occasional, and consisted of readings from his own manuscripts, of parts of a large History of the Church of Scotland, of the Secession, etc., and of some dissertations on the subject of toleration, together with papers on pastoral duty, etc., many of which have since been printed.

'Our ordinary meeting was in the forenoon of every day; but we had a second meeting often to hear discourses by students, at which the students were called on, in order as they sat, to offer remarks on the discourse, its language, its method and particular expressions, which commonly occupied more time than the discourse that was criticised, and in which the great body of the students took a part. The Professor protected the preacher against unjust or unduly severe censures, and the exercise was found, on experience, to be profitable to the class.

'Every student had more work to perform than now. A first year's student had only one discourse—a homily of perhaps nearly half an hour's length,—the text of which was given him the first day of his appearance, and which he had to compose and deliver within five or six weeks. The second year student had to deliver a lecture on a portion of Scripture, and an exercise and additions from a verse in the Old Testament. An exegesis was assigned; but if it could not be got ready, there was permission to defer it to a subsequent year. The third, fourth, and fifth years' students had assigned to them each three discourses; a lecture on a passage of scripture; a confessional lecture on one entire chapter of the Confession of Faith, which the student was expected not to commit to memory, but to read it from his notes; and a popular sermon, which was delivered before as many of the people as chose to attend at an afternoon meeting.

'Meetings were held on the afternoons for hearing sermons, a meeting of the students by themselves for disputation, and on the Saturdays for prayer.

'We all loved and revered the teacher. He showed every day the deep interest he took in our welfare. His addresses to us, which were frequent, and especially his farewell addresses at the close of the session, were very impressive, solemnized the giddiest minds among us, and frequently brought the tears from our eyes.'

We have no particulars of importance to give concerning the progress of our student while fulfilling his sessions at Haddington. He was distinguished, however, for great simplicity of manners, indefatigable application, and almost premature wisdom. He was much honoured by the Professor, who admitted him to great confidence and intimacy, and sometimes hinted that he should be kept in view as his successor in the chair. On one occasion, indeed, when Mr Brown had left the class-room for a few minutes, Lawson, rather unlike himself, mounted the Professor's chair, and com-

menced, in a jocular style, to address the students. On returning, Mr Brown listened for a moment at the door, till the voice ceased; and, on taking the chair again, he very good-naturedly remarked, 'I perceive I have already got a successor.' The only other incident we have heard of, illustrates an excellence in his character to which fuller allusion must be afterwards made. On returning one session to Haddington, Lawson found that his Hebrew Bible was too large to be put into his travelling-trunk. He resolved to leave it behind him, and did so. Several large passages of the Hebrew Scriptures had been prescribed for that session, and the day came when Lawson was called upon to read them. He stood up, and commenced the lesson; the Professor noticed that he had not a Bible in his hand, and asked the explanation. 'I could not conveniently bring my Hebrew Bible,' he replied, 'but I do not require one,—I have committed to memory, and can repeat it all.' Upon the principle that 'pulchrum est laudari a laudato,' we may here quote a saying of Mr Brown, which proves the high esteem in which he held not only George Lawson, but other three of his fellow-students, to be often referred to in these pages: 'I do not know whether I have been of much service in my generation, but I am happy that I have been the means of bringing up four such young men for the ministry, as Andrew Swanston, George Lawson, David Greig, and James Peddie.' The Professor's estimate of his student was proved in another way. Observing his uncommon attainments, he assigned him peculiar exercises to deliver, of one of which it is honourable to both parties to state, that he requested a copy, and engrossed it in the system of divinity which he then read to his students, and afterwards published to the world.[1]

By all his fellow-students he was beloved and admired, and won amongst them friendships which were the sweeteners of his life. At Haddington he became acquainted with one

[1] Dr Adam Thomson.

student, of whom we shall have not a little to say in the course of this memoir: his name was Husband, between whom and Lawson there grew up an intimacy, equalling, if it did not exceed, that which existed between the latter and Greig. Dr Husband, of Dunfermline, and Dr Lawson, of Selkirk, were for nearly fifty years associated together in all the intimacies of private, and in much of the action of public life. 'They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their deaths they were not divided.' They died within three months of each other, in 1820.

During the recesses both of the College and of the Divinity Hall, George Lawson continued to dwell in the humble farmhouse of his father. He never could apply himself to any kind of handiwork. He was born to be a student—to be a minister—to work with the brain,—the hardest, as it is the highest, of all human employment. 'The manifest and strong tendency,' says one of his friends, 'of his mind, at a very early period of life, was to book learning and religion. In other concerns he was habitually absent—in these always at home. It was difficult, and almost impossible, to fix his attention to any ordinary engagement or pursuit; but from reading, study, and the practice of Christian duties, no consideration could withhold his attention. For the petty details of business and amusements he displayed little capacity, and less relish. In those more noble pursuits, however, towards which his mind was ever so powerfully carried, things which rose far above the level of common minds were with him matters of easy attainment. Here his attention was ever spontaneous and close; his powers of external perception awake and active; his mind able to sit in clear and discriminating judgment upon its own thoughts and operations; his memory at once scientific, and quick, and retentive; his habits of abstraction easy and correct; and the association of his ideas appropriate, prompt, and natural. In most people, some one power or operation of the mind habitually and

greatly predominates; but in the mind of this distinguished person, there appeared, from first to last, an harmonious and singular balance of the various mental powers and operations.'[1] In consequence of this constitutional bias towards a life of reflection, Lawson was not employed during the vacations, as many of his companions were. Honourably to support themselves, they engaged in public or in private teaching. But he had not only no liking for such employments, he rather disliked them; herein bearing a resemblance to the now famous moderate of Inveresk, to whom the office of 'tutor was an object of abhorrence,'—not, however, precisely for the same reasons. Jupiter Carlyle thought that most tutors contracted 'a certain obsequiousness or *bassesse*,' to which he could not expose himself. He afterwards corrected this opinion as to many of them with whom he got acquainted; but, unfortunately, he fell into this very ditch himself, when, in after life, he practised that self-same *bassesse* in the ecclesiastical flunkeyism of the moderates of those days. George Lawson had no such aversion to the position, only he preferred to remain and prosecute study at home. On two occasions only he made the attempt. He became for one winter tutor in the family of Walter Simpson, Esq., of Dalwich, who was grandfather to one of Dr Lawson's own most eminent students;[2] and for a much shorter period he was tutor to the family of Mr Kennedy, of Romanno. Here, though otherwise very happy with the Kennedys, he could not be constrained to remain longer than one week. He was offered, but refused all remuneration. Miss Kennedy, however, prevailed on him to accept of a present of Leighton's expository works, in three volumes, which are still to be found in his library at Selkirk. Had it been in his case as much a matter of necessity as it was in that of many of his contemporaries, he would, no doubt, have set himself manfully

[1] *The Christian Repository*, April 1820, p. 194.

[2] Rev. Dr Simpson, of Sanquhar.

to overcome his dislike of teaching. He had sufficient independence of mind, as well as powers of application for that. But his father's circumstances were easy, and the student was welcome to all the indulgence he required. Though not in this line, he did in other ways indicate his appreciation of the parental kindness. During harvest he would often betake himself to the fields, and assist the reapers on the farm, returning to his studies with fresh zeal and application; and, when at length his father died, George refused to take any share of the family patrimony, which was *considerable.*

Having now completed his term of study at the Hall, he entered upon trials for licence before the Edinburgh Presbytery. He passed all these trials to the high satisfaction of the Presbytery; and, with an unusual reputation for learning and wisdom, he obtained his license to preach the glorious Gospel, when little more than twenty years of age.

CHAPTER II.

THE PASTOR AND HIS CIRCUIT.

The Presbytery's license to preach the glorious Gospel of our Lord and Saviour is quite a crisis in the young student's life. Up to this period he has been 'under tutors and governors' —he has been in 'perils oft'—his mind and his will have been held in by the bridles of academic and ecclesiastical authority, very much to the chafing of the inward 'Hotspur,' but more to the advantage of the 'hidden part,' wherein he has been 'made to know wisdom.' Now, however, he is as 'Naphtali, a hind let loose;' and having got, he is free to give, 'goodly words' to all that have 'ears to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.' It is a delicious sensation, when one, in these circumstances, leaves the bar of that court before which he has so often feared and trembled, and bounds forth into the free and bracing air of an accomplished independence. Limits and restraints there may yet be, but the ordeal is passed—examinations are wound up; and the grand commission is his, to 'go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.' All past sacrifices, and struggles, and studies, have now obtained their reward; and, for a time, it seems as if, this one grand object gained, very little more remains either to be desired or done. It is interesting to think of Lawson as he left the Presbytery House in Edinburgh on the day of his licence. We think we see his tall, spare figure rounding the corner of old Bristo Church, and walking pensively, and, we doubt not, prayerfully, to his lodgings, or, it may be, towards the road to West Linton. It

is not likely that, in these days, there was any public conveyance to that humble village. He had often walked on that road in going to and coming from college; and, if he did so on this occasion, it is not difficult to imagine what must have been his prevailing thoughts. From his early piety, we may be sure that he would feel that weight of responsibility which increased upon his consciousness to the end of his life. He had just closed one eventful period of his pilgrimage. Its memories would gather around him like the shadows of a serene evening, deepening and darkening into the fancies of an untried future. The almost voluptuous sense of emancipation from scholastic and clerical discipline would probably, for the moment, be lost under the solemn realization of his new position and its imperative demands. He would think, and none could think more meekly, of his unworthiness to serve God as a minister of the New Testament. He would, perhaps, play the coward for a time, as many good men have done at such gates of entrance into the battle-ground of faith and service, saying, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' The slopes of the beautiful Pentland Hills, if they could, might testify to the agony of his prayers that night, as he wended his way along their base to the home of his boyhood. In after years, to this 'Nathanael'—this 'Israelite indeed'—the Master might whisper, 'When thou wast under the shadows of these hills, I saw thee.'

And what a welcome home the young probationer would get! He had all along been an object of holy interest to his parents. For him old Charles Lawson had risen early and toiled hard in the workshop; for him Margaret Noble had economized in barn and dairy; for him the younger branches of the family had cheerfully denied themselves,—all under the blessed hope, that they should live to see and hear him in a pulpit. That hope was about to be realized. There was, of course, great joy that night at the farmer's ingle; and fervent prayers at family worship would crown the sacredness of that

memorable day. That worship over, the evening meal consumed, what else could be the burden of their talk but the coming Sabbath, and his first appearance in the pulpit of good Mr Mair? Expectation was high, for the lad was believed to be both learned and pious. Nor did he disappoint hopes. The Sabbath dawned. It was evident that something unusual was on the *tapis* that day in this quiet hamlet. There was a stir about the place quite uncommon. A small group here and there were conversing near to the meeting-house, and kindly wishes were expressed that the 'young lad' would acquit himself creditably. And he did so. He walked up to the pulpit with becoming gravity of manner—a gravity which kept itself on and in his manner to the close of his ministry. After the preliminary devotional exercises were over, he gave out his first text (which cannot now be ascertained), and, without stop or stutter, delivered a long and interesting discourse, to the satisfaction of Mr Mair, the laudable gratification of his kinsmen, and the benefit of all concerned. It is esteemed a success in our churches in Scotland, if the trial of a first sermon be got through without what is called 'sticking' the discourse. This means, that the discourse has been committed to and delivered from memory —not only without the use (in the pulpit) of any notes whatever, but also without any pause, or break-down, or resort to the manuscript of the preacher. Lawson's first sermon had this merit at least, if merit it may be esteemed in a man whose powers of memory were almost supernatural, and who for fifty years continued to deliver *memoriter* hundreds of sermons and lectures of the highest order of intellectual and evangelical power.

But the probationer's life must now be commenced. He must leave his father's house and itinerate among the 'vacancies,' as it is customary to designate those churches whose *pulpits* have been deprived—by death or translation—of their ministers. The old farmer had just one thing more to do for

his son. At that time there were no railways, no steamboats, and even very few stage-coaches in Scotland. Probationers of the Church had, therefore, to make their journeys on foot, or provide themselves with ponies. They had, in addition, to get what were called '*saddlebags*,' or flexible portmanteaus, which contained the books, the parchments, and the body-clothes, and were thrown across the back of the animal behind the rider. Fond fathers, who wished to encourage their sons to study for the ministry, used to say (and the compiler had it said to himself), 'If you be diligent and well-behaved, I will carry you on till I put you on the saddlebags,'—meaning that the necessary means for maintenance and education would be supplied up to the period of licence. This, the last equipment of all, was provided for George Lawson; and having 'put him on the saddlebags,' the tie that had till now linked him to the old man's bounty was broken for ever. He left the homestead where all his earthly wants had been hitherto provided for, and set out into life to receive and fulfill the appointments of Providence.

He did not turn out what is called a popular preacher. As his character and tastes were developed, it soon became apparent that he had proposed to himself a higher object than mere popularity. He aimed at becoming acceptable through usefulness. He therefore studied profoundly, in order to preach simply. His general deportment was then what it ever was: distant alike from mere sanctimony and levity, he was devout, happy, exemplary. His youthful appearance, his tall figure (he was about six feet in height), and his winning artlessness, deepened the impression made by the respectability of his public discourses. It was even then anticipated that he would prove himself to be an extraordinary and distinguished minister of Christ; and such, indeed, he became, though to a degree even beyond the fondest hopes of his admirers.

The pay or stipend of the probationer in those days was

only half a guinea for a Sabbath-day's work. Provision and lodging, however, were found both for man and beast. The 'beast,' on the arrival of the preacher at any town or hamlet, was sent off to the stables of some farmer—a member of the vacant church,—and who was but too proud to show kindness to the preacher's 'friend,' while the 'man' was received into the house of some other member who might be willing, sometimes for love and sometimes for money, to grant the required accommodation. It was understood then that the right of the preacher to this arrangement extended from Friday to Friday. Some really interesting and characteristic anecdotes are told all over the Secession Church, illustrative of this somewhat patriarchal state of things. The celebrated Rowland Hill was, when on a visit to Scotland, similarly entertained. On that occasion he happened to be 'put up' in the most homely manner in a habitation near to Haddington. He was travelling, of course, on horseback. At family worship in the evening, Mr Hill prayed fervently for the good folks of the house, and then for his '*dear steed*.' Surprise was expressed afterwards that he should pray for a beast; but Mr Hill satisfied them that he was right in doing so, as he was entirely dependent upon the animal for getting through his Master's work from county to county, and from town to town. The only incident in this direction in the 'preacher-life' of Lawson that has survived, refers in a simple way to his scholarly turn of mind. He had been lodging, in his peregrinations, with a worthy elder, whom he sometimes rather mystified with his learned criticisms on Scripture, as they conversed on the deep things of God. One night they were reading together the ninth Psalm, which is addressed 'to the chief musician upon Muth-labben.' On reading this, Mr Lawson remarked, 'This word "*Muth-labben*" is a word which nobody can make anything of; it is not understood.' The elder replied, interrupting the reading of the Word, 'You are but a young man yet, Mr Lawson, and

though you do not understand that word, older and deeper scholars than you are maybe able.' The preacher did not answer, but finished the reading of the psalm. In after years, when the fame of the Selkirk divine was far and wide, that same elder was heard testifying that 'he came to find that George Lawson, even in youth, knew a vast deal more than many older scholars and divines.' This method of lodging the probationers of the Church was of mutual benefit to them and to the people. It made the members of congregations personally acquainted with the ministers of religion, and consequently greatly strengthened their attachment to the cause of the Secession, which was not so independent then as it is now. We are disposed to trace to this arrangement not a little of that sacred regard for the *office* of the Christian pastorate, for which the Scotch people are remarkable above all others. They have always discerned Divine authority in the institution; and for that reason have uniformly paid appropriate respect to the 'earthen vessels' in whom the Gospel treasure has been placed, not that the glory might be theirs, but that God should be glorified in them. The modern facilities in travelling have many advantages, but it is doubtful if the speed of transit has, in this respect, at all benefited the Church. There is a danger of letting go the hold we have ever had of the affections of the people, by the temptation to hasten away from one place to another; and thus may be stifled, just as it begins to breathe, that partiality for the men which often grows on from them to be intertwisted with the system they represent.

Mr Lawson's acceptability as a preacher was speedily proved. He was, in course, appointed to supply the pulpit of the Secession Church at Selkirk, which had been recently rendered vacant by the death of its first minister, Mr Moir. In due time he was unanimously called to be Mr Moir's successor. The usual steps, however, towards his ordination, were not immediately taken. His predilections lay elsewhere.

He had recently preached as a candidate to the congregation of Orwell, or Milnathort, in Kinross-shire, and it was resolved to give him the call. This resolution, however, was not carried into effect. It was understood that the opinion of the Professor at Haddington had been taken upon it, and that he dissuaded the people from going further in the matter. It seems Mr Brown had an aversion to any of his students being called to more than one vacancy, which accounts for the arrestment made upon the Orwell movement. To Mr Lawson, this, on many accounts, was a sore disappointment. To the locality of Orwell he was much attached. It lies near to Kinross and Lochleven. He could see the grave of Michael Bruce from its heights. He could walk in a forenoon to the kind patrons of his first Hall days, and live over again in the mansions of Turfhills and Lethangie the fellowships of his dearest earthly friends. Above all, his 'fidus achates,' David Greig, had been, or was about to be, called to Lochgelly, in the immediate neighbourhood. No arrangement could have been more gratifying to him, than to have been located where their friendship could be enjoyed in uninterrupted fulness and freeness. But to the dispensations of Providence he did then, as he did ever, meekly bow the head. He was consequently ordained pastor of the Selkirk Church in 1771. The following extract, from the minutes of the Edinburgh Presbytery, will show that the procedure in this ordination was in danger, from the very laudable firmness of the court upon the subject of a just and liberal support to the minister:—

HAUGHHEAD, NEAR PENNICUICK, 16*th May* 1805.

'MY DEAR SIR,—After some little search in the records of Presbytery, I have found the minute of which you desired me to send you a copy—the tenor whereof follows:—"Edinburgh, March 19, 1771. The Presbytery met, etc. Mr George Lawson having delivered the rest of his trials assigned him, and answered extempore questions in Divinity, the Pres-

bytery approve of the same as parts of trials for ordination. Moreover, having conversed with the commissioners from the congregation of Selkirk, and finding them not duly authorized by their constituents to satisfy the Presbytery with respect to their reasonable demands upon that congregation, of paying up to the children of their deceased minister fifteen pounds sterling more than is done, which makes one half-year's stipend after his death, and of settling seventy pounds sterling per annum upon Mr George Lawson, whom they have now called to be their pastor, the Presbytery are dissatisfied with the commissioners' want of due power on this head; yet, being unwilling to delay the settlement of Mr Lawson, they hereby declare that the payment of the demand for the orphans of their late pastor is just and reasonable, and that they are determined to insist upon it. They further declare that, according to the expense of living in the country, seventy pounds is no more than barely sufficient to make their minister live comfortable, and that the Presbytery will claim said provision whenever they understand the congregation is deficient, unless it be found they are incapable to afford it; and having tendered the call to Mr Lawson, and he having taken it and returned it to the moderator in the usual manner, they agreed that his ordination be expeded on Wednesday, the 17th April next ensuing," etc. Extracted from the records this 16th May 1805, by

'PAT. COMRIE, *Presbytery Clerk.*

'To the Rev. Geo. Lawson.'

Of the interesting services of Mr Lawson's ordination there are but scanty reports. The Rev. William Kidston, of Stow, presided on the occasion. He had himself been called to the same church previous to his settlement at Stow. He had subsequently ordained Mr Andrew Moir, now he ordains Mr Lawson, and thirty-five years subsequently he was appointed by the Presbytery to perform the same service when the late Mr

Lawson of Kilmarnock was translated to his venerable father's pulpit. Declining health, however, prevented his fulfilment of this duty. He was a strong-minded and judicious expounder of God's Word, a profound theologian, and an eminently devout man. In after years it fell to Dr Lawson to preach his funeral sermon at Stow. One anecdote remains of Mr Kidston's ministry at Stow, which is worthy of record here. It has been told of several others, but I have heard the late Dr Kidston tell that it had its origin in the following incident:—Mr Kidston had gone to a country farm-house to preach and baptize the farmer's son. The service, as was then customary, took place in the large barn or threshing-floor, which was usually filled with the neighbours and friends, who received their invitation from the pulpit on the previous Sabbath, the misdemeanour of *private* baptism being thus avoided. When the services were concluded, the minister and a few more intimate friends remained to dinner with the family. When the time came for drinking to the health and happiness of the child, Mr Kidston gave the following toast: 'Here's wishing the health and long life of the wean, and may he be a better man than his father.' All heartily joined in the same, except the farmer himself, whose countenance fell, and whose tongue became dumb during the remainder of the afternoon. Mr Kidston mounted his pony to depart. The farmer stood beside him. 'Good night,' said the minister. 'It's no good night yet, sir,' replied the farmer, who took hold of the bridle and led the pony forward. When they had cleared the homestead, and were a little on the way, Mr Kidston asked the farmer the meaning of his conduct, and whether anything had been done to offend him. After a little pause, the farmer said, 'I want to know, sir, whether you have heard anything ill of me.' 'No, John,' replied Mr Kidston, 'I have not. Is there any ill I should have heard?' 'I know of none, sir,' said John; 'and yet at the baptism to-day you affronted me before all my family and friends, by wishing my wean to be a

better man than his father.' 'Oh,' said the minister quickly, 'is that all?' 'Yes,' quoth the farmer, 'that is all, and it is bad enough.' 'I am ashamed of you, John,' said Mr Kidston; 'are you such a fool as not to wish every child you have to be better than yourself?' 'Oh,' said the farmer, as the light broke in upon him, 'is that all?' 'Yes,' replied the minister, 'that's all.' 'Good night then,' said John; and they parted.

When Mr Lawson was ordained, the Secession Church in Scotland was nearly forty years old, and had already risen to be an influence for good and an authority for Gospel in the land. It had descended from heaven, not as the thundercloud, in heavy sweeping streams, pours forth its rain, but softly and sweetly, as the breath of the Lord moves over the people, or 'as the dew of heaven, the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion.' The sacrifices, the prayers, and the glorious preachings of the Erskines, Wilson, Fisher, and Moncrieff, were now bringing forth good fruit. The people began to know the Gospel sound; and, though not moved by any ecclesiastical management, they gradually, under the influence of principle, joined these martyr-witnesses for God and truth, for liberty and purity, until there was scarcely a corner of the country to which they were not welcomed. By this time, however, the split had taken place which ranged those good and worthy testifiers under separate banners, yclept the one 'Burghers,' the other 'Anti-Burghers'—pretty names, forsooth, wherewith, as Christ's disciples, they burlesqued each other. With the Burghers, Charles Lawson and his family had cast in their lot. Consequently their son, when he became a minister, joined their ranks; and he continued to be a 'Burgher' through life,—that is, attached to those peculiar views of toleration in religion which have since become universal in the united body. He was no bigot, but he held his opinions on such subjects very conscientiously; and while he was ever ready to give a reason for the faith

that was in him, he at no time manifested any personal dislike to those from whom he differed, or clung so doggedly to party as to overlook at any time the 'major bonum ecclesiæ.' As the circumstances which gave rise to the Secession in Selkirk throw some light upon the ecclesiastical character of these times, it may be proper briefly to notice them.

In the year 1739, the Duke of Buccleuch, as patron of the church of Bowden, presented a Mr Hume to the vacant charge. Only four of the parishioners could be prevailed upon to sign the call. The Presbytery, in consequence, ruled that it should not be sustained. A process of litigation was then instituted before the Church courts. The result was in favour of the settlement, but only by a majority of one. The reluctant Presbytery was compelled to proceed with the ordination. In this, as in many similar cases, the triumph of might over right tended to the spread of the young Secession Church. The good people of Bowden could not be convinced that the dragoons from Edinburgh, who assisted at Mr Hume's settlement, were scriptural authorities in such a matter, left the Established Church, and joined the Associate Synod. A place of worship was erected at Midholm. Mr Matthew was called, and in due time was ordained. After this came dissensions and controversy, that split the Secession into the two parties already noticed, according to the views held on the paltry subject of a burgess oath. Such of the members of Midholm congregation as adhered to the Burgher Synod removed the seat of their church to Selkirk, and, after some disappointments, succeeded in obtaining Mr Andrew Moir for their minister. This first minister of the Selkirk congregation appears to have been no ordinary man. Dr M'Kerrow describes him as 'a man of a high order of talent,' and of a 'superior style of preaching.' Great prosperity to the congregation followed upon his ordination. 'Few ministers ever attained to a higher degree of popularity than he did. When he assisted at sacramental occasions in

the neighbourhood, the people flocked to the tent, and listened to him with admiration. Even infidels and scoffers at religion were struck with the style of his preaching and the manner of his address, and were sometimes heard to say, "Come and let us go to the tent and hear Moir, for he speaks his nonsense in a graceful way."'[1] He had a very dignified and commanding appearance; and to him that text has been applied, 'A choice young man and goodly; there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier young man than he.' He lived in stormy times, but was equal to their demands. Though brilliant, however, his ministry was brief. He died, at the age of thirty-nine, in 1770, and in the twelfth year of his ministry. His memory is still savoury on the banks of the Ettrick, as at once the founder and father of what is now the United Presbyterian Church in Selkirk. There are traditionary remembrances of this able and sainted young man's pastorate which justify this. An old hearer of his, when asked if he remembered him, said to the present pastor—a grandson of Dr Lawson's—'Deed, sir, I mind Mr Moir weel; he was a burning and a shining light. I can honestly assure you he was far more *popular* than a' you Lawsons.' His dying scene must have been deeply impressive. Only a few hours before his death, he called for a pen, and wrote these simple but sweet lines, more full of God's redemptive truth than of genius or poetry:—

'For me God's Prophet came from heaven,
To assure me that a Son was given!
For me God's Priest was crucified,
For me He bled, for me He died!
For me God's King hung on the tree,
And bare the curse was due to me!
For me God's only child was born,
For me He wore the crown of thorn!

'What is His name? My guilty soul,
His name is truly "Wonderful!"

[1] Dr M'Kerrow.

But is this child of royal blood?
Yes! because He is "The Mighty Lord."
Shall, then, His honours ever cease?
No; for His name's The Prince of Peace.
And what is this great Prince to thee?
My Lord! my God! Eternally.'

And thus he passed away.

The newly-ordained pastor commenced his ministry on the Sabbath following the ordination. He preached from these words in the 26th Psalm: 'Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thine honour dwelleth.' The text was eminently descriptive of his own feelings, as evinced by his life and practice. A more devout, regular, and humble attender on Divine ordinances never lived. He was not only most punctual and constant in the discharge of his official duties, but embraced every opportunity of attending the ministrations of others. That the preacher was accounted weak and unacceptable, or that he was reputed a man of talent and eloquence, seemed to make no difference to him. It was the ordinances of God that he loved; and he repeatedly affirmed, 'I do not recollect of ever hearing a sermon from which I might not have derived benefit, if it were not my own fault: it is a gross mistake to consider mere preaching or instruction to be the great or sole object of public worship.' His sermon on this occasion made a powerful impression not only on his own people, but on the whole locality. He was considered to be not so oratorical as Mr Moir, but more profound and learned. From this day he took his position, and occupied it for nearly fifty years, fulfilling in his ministry all the promises of his early days. To the old couple at home, this was a day to be held in holy memory. They had now got their hearts' dearest wish—they had a son in the ministry. Charles Lawson lived to see that son peerless among his peers. He died in 1786. Had he lived one year more, he would have seen him occupy the highest position to which the Church could elevate him. As

it was, for fully fifteen years did he enjoy the paternal feast of participating in the ministry at Selkirk. Hallmyre was a long way off, about thirty-five miles; but he did not grudge the distance, especially at sacramental times, for the sake of sitting at the feet of an instructor in righteousness, for whom he had laboured, and sacrificed, and prayed. His death was an affliction to that son; but he 'sorrowed not, even as others who have no hope.'

Immediately after ordination, Mr Lawson set himself seriously to the discharge of the duties of his sacred office. His predecessor left him a congregation accustomed to 'the finest of the wheat;' and it was no easy undertaking to satisfy the spiritual appetite his fervent and eloquent preaching had created. The people, however, soon discovered that they had found a 'master in Israel;' and that if he had not the splendid rhetoric of Mr Moir, he was before him in what have been termed 'the profundities of theology.' From the very outset of his ministry, his remarkable attainments were evident; and these, coupled with his fascinating simplicity and truthfulness, soon captivated all hearts.

Mr Lawson had been only a few weeks settled in Selkirk when he received the following characteristic epistle from his friend, David Greig, the commencement of a correspondence which continued very intimate for nearly half a century, and was only interrupted by death. Toward the whole of the Lethangie family, with whom many pleasant days in early youth were passed, George Lawson cherished the warmest friendship, and it was amply returned and repaid:—

'LETHANGIE, *July* 9, 1771.

'DEAR GEORDIE,—I take this opportunity of informing you, that your very obliging letter came to my hand on Saturday last, when at Lochgellie. I am glad to find that you still continue to preserve a cheerful temper and a friendly disposition. Your long delay in writing me had almost

tempted me to think that the air of Selkirk had made a considerable alteration on your constitution; and the duties of your station, with the circle of your new acquaintances, had banished from your mind the remembrance of your old companions. I now begin to change my sentiments about you, and think that you are George Lawson still, though Rev. be of late added to your name. I don't mean to insinuate that the above delay had in the least weakened my affection or lessened my esteem for you; but you know that, when usual testimonies of friendship are denied, we are naturally led to inquire into the reasons of it, and to suspect that the silence of our friend is owing to some fault in our own conduct. I hope you was not offended because I did not comply with your request at the Synod, to go along with you to Selkirk. I expect I shall soon make a sufficient amend for that fault, by staying with you longer than I could well have done at that time. Mr Henderson is frequently in the country, and has for these eight days bygone been somewhat indisposed, which has rendered him incapable of fulfilling his appointments to the Presbytery. He is much sunk in his spirits, and continues averse to a compliance with the Synod's determination. None of his trials are yet delivered; and whether he will yield to the injunctions of his superiors is perhaps a little uncertain. You ought to write him upon that matter; and I doubt not but that your advice may have some influence upon him. His call to Glasgow seems to be clear; and though difficulties occur to him, they certainly ought not to make him desert his duty. Whether Mr Porteous will come to Orwal is likewise doubtful. His trials are all over, and his edict is served; but the time of his ordination is not determined. His opposers are as violent as ever; and their minds are so soured with prejudice, that there is little ground to expect that they will ever be brought to a submission. Even the callers are much disheartened in their design, through the strength of the opposition. How

matters will turn out, I know not; but one thing I am certain of, that religion has suffered much in this place by these contentions. You may reckon yourself happy that you are settled in a congregation where such a plague does not prevail. You have but little reason to think that the Gospel is attended with success, where the professors of it are alienated from one another in affection, and each one strives to disconcert the design of his neighbour. Nor are differences even confined to the people,—if that were the case, we would reckon ourselves in some measure happy; but the misery of it is, that ministers are split in affection, and divided in their judgments. It is hardly thought that Mr Smith and Mr Forrest will ever be brought to an agreement: the latter seems to set himself in opposition to all terms of reconciliation, and is supposed to have his head towards another party. These things grieve the spirits of the serious, and make our sacramental occasions wear a very gloomy appearance. This account of things will damp your spirits, but may serve also to render your situation more agreeable, which is happily free of such disturbances. My discourses for Had——n go on but slowly, and I despair of getting them finished to any purpose. I know you smile at this, who are able to make so many in one week. But a little too fast, Geordie. Do you remember what Mr Richardson once said to Mr Brown, when intimating his difficulties about some of his discourses? The Professor said to Will, that he thought he could soon make a discourse upon such a text; to which Rich——n humorously replied, "I think, if I were Mr B——n, I would soon make one too." The application is obvious. The longer I continue to study divinity, the greater difficulties do I find in treating the truths of the Gospel in a manner that becomes their dignity, that can be interesting to others, or that can even satisfy myself. Perhaps, if their genuine power was personally felt upon the heart, some of these would be removed.

'DAVID GREIG.'

Before proceeding further with this narrative, it may interest the reader to take a quiet walk to the remarkable localities within Mr Lawson's pastoral circuit.

Selkirk, and a radius of country about eight miles in extent, now became, and during his life continued to be, the sphere of Mr Lawson's interesting pastorate. Here this great and good man lived, and studied, and suffered, and laboured for Jesus Christ, and for the souls of men. Though at the first his choice would have been Orwell, he very soon discovered that his 'lines had fallen in pleasant places,' and was not only reconciled to, but enraptured with, the place of his habitation. Had he been somewhat of a cosmopolitan, like Dr Kitto, we might have enjoyed many opportunities of sketching the scenery, and describing the manners and the people of foreign lands; but in his life there are no incidents of travel, no hairbreadth escapes, no curiosities either of art or science, no exciting correspondence, no illustrious associates, nothing whatever of that racy and diversified material, the story of which imparts so much piquancy and gusto to other biographies. It seems to be all the more on that account our duty briefly to sketch the environs of Selkirk, with which his honoured name is still, and must long continue to be associated; and, also, to notice at least a few of the persons and events that have given notoriety to the neighbourhood. The scenery of his life-long visitation and enjoyment is the most beautiful and picturesque in Scotland; and he had a soul that could appreciate and improve upon it. It was, in its own place, a sort of library to him,—a library whose books he studied, and whose lessons oft withdrew him from the abstractions of sacred thought, to the perception and praise of the Deity, present with and ever presiding over His own wonderful works. The Ettrick, the Yarrow, the Gala, and the Tweed—all classic streams—were, through life, tributaries to his meditations and his devotions. On their romantic banks he 'walked with God,' and received impres-

sions and abode under influences, which did as much to form his character and employ his mind, as the Rhine, the Po, the Jordan, and the Ganges have ever done for those who, in foreign travel, seek to escape the curse of *ennui*, or satisfy the cravings after novelties. Indeed, that circle of natural loveliness within which he passed a lifetime, was to him a temple wherein he ofttimes communed with his God, braced up his soul for God's work, and offered unto Him his sublimest devotions. It was, moreover, the holy place of his dearest friendships. In harmony with his were the tastes of the men of God who came about him—men who could first of all intensify their souls on the service of the sanctuary, and thereafter with him give life and freedom to our social zests when rambling and musing amid nature's choicest scenes.

> 'They found tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in everything.'

A volume, indeed, might be written on the subject of these friendships. Partial allusion has been made to some of them already. Justice requires that, in another chapter, they receive more particular notice. If a man is known by his friendships, the character of Lawson cannot be faithfully sketched apart from his. Had some of the men who trod life's path with him lived now, the Church would not willingly have allowed their memories to fade away as they are doing.

It is not easy, even at this distance of time, to dissociate Selkirk and Lawson. This small county town has a fame of its kind, but its chance of being interesting to futurity may depend less upon its 'Souters' than upon its 'Lawson.' Centuries ago, the whole of that country side was one vast forest. There was then no skriveallty, and no town folks, and but few county people. There was but one building in that part of the forest—it was a 'Kirk,' or chapel. Hence the name 'Selkirk,' or, as it is in the Celtic, 'Scheleckgrech,'

corrupted 'Selcraig.' Selkirk means, 'the Kirk of the Wood, or Forest.' This one word expresses the situation of the place itself, and the state of the surrounding country. It is probable, indeed, according to Sir John Sinclair, that all the neighbouring districts were once an extensive forest. It is certain that the banks of the rivers, by which the country is so happily intersected, were once adorned with wood. It was amid these sylvan scenes that those plaintive airs were produced, the pastoral simplicity of which are the pride of Scotsmen and the admiration of strangers. That vast forest home is now gone,—

> 'The scenes are desert now and bare
> Where flourished once a forest fair,
> Up pathless Ettrick and on Yarrow,
> Where erst the outlaw drew his arrow.'—SCOTT.

It was in this neighbourhood that the famous battle of Flodden was fought; and the calamities that then befell Selkirk gave birth to that exquisite lyric, 'The Flowers of the Forest.' The town itself has no special claim to be noticed. It is built on a rising piece of ground, at the base of which the river Ettrick flows. The scenery, however, for miles both up and down that romantic stream, is worthy of its reputation. As you cross the bridge at the west end, you first of all pass near to the place where the Yarrow and the Ettrick meet; and keeping to the right hand, you are at once upon the fair and wide domain of Philiphaugh. When musing here, the patriotic and religious zeal of Lawson oft drew long and large breaths of more intense love 'pro aris et focis.' On one of these fields was fought, and won by the Covenanters, a famous battle which undid the effects of former Royal victories, and put Montrose and his dragoons to a shameful flight. The field of battle is now included within the pleasure-grounds of William Murray, Esq. of Philiphaugh, who has piously erected a memorial cairn close upon the spot where the heroes

of General Leslie put the Royalists to flight, and bearing the following inscription:—

TO THE MEMORY
OF THE COVENANTERS
WHO FOUGHT AND FELL ON THE FIELD
OF
PHILIPHAUGH,
AND WON THE BATTLE HERE,
A.D. SEP. 13, 1645.

Leaving the grounds of Philiphaugh by the west gate, you soon come to a small farm-steading called Foulshiels, on the right hand side of the road. And here we must pause for a little, for here Lawson was often to be seen in company with a young man whose fame has become world-wide—Mungo Park, the African traveller. The family at Foulshiels were, from its origin, members of the Burgher Church of Selkirk, and their son Mungo continued, up to his second journey to Africa, to belong to it. He was from boyhood a great favourite with his minister, for he was the second child baptized by him; and as he grew up, and gave indications of that marvellous spirit of enterprise by which he afterwards became so much distinguished, Mr Lawson's interest in him was greatly increased. It is known that he formed a high estimate of the young man. He assisted and encouraged him in his studies, and, above all, took the deepest interest in his travels. Park often called on Dr Lawson, on his return from Africa; and they held long conversations not only on the adventures of the traveller, but on the manners, customs, and religious rites of the sable Ethiopians, especially on the probabilities of their speedily 'stretching forth their hands unto God.' Dr Lawson was a great smoker—so was Park; and the cigars which the young traveller brought home with him for the minister were rapidly consumed in the library at Selkirk, or upon the banks of the Ettrick, or by the farmer's

ingle at Foulshiels, as the stirring stories of African adventure were told and heard. We can easily conceive the spell wherewith the listeners would be bound, when, beneath that humble roof-tree, he first recited and hummed that plaintive air of the African negro's lament for the poor white man :—

> 'The winds roared, and the rains fell,—
> The poor white man, faint and weary,
> Came and sat under our tree:
> He has no mother to bring him milk,
> No wife to grind his corn.
> Let us pity the white man,
> Who has no mother to buy him milk,
> No wife to grind his corn.'

It is somewhat interesting, that recently a monument to Park has been erected in the principal street of Selkirk, almost opposite the door of the minister's manse. When, from his long silence after his last return to Africa, it began to be whispered that Mungo must have fallen a victim to adventure in travel, and when the family abandoned all hope of ever hearing from or seeing him again, they were much comforted by the sympathy of their worthy pastor, who kept up their spirits by his wise and Christian consolations so long as any hope existed of a return, and who helped them to 'kiss the rod' when every hope was abandoned. The profound and extensive sympathy of the country in the success of the traveller's explorations, and in his personal safety, tended, no doubt, to strengthen their hearts, while the universal regret expressed for his untimely and mysterious death shed a kind of pleasant halo around his and their name; but the 'garments of praise' which the kind and compassionate Lawson substituted for their 'spirit of heaviness,' and the 'oil of joy' which he poured out for their 'mourning,' assisted their resignation to the will of God. Many were their conjectures, for a time, of Mungo's safe return some day; and on each visit to Foulshiels the subject was again and again discussed, till the

hearts of all became sick with deferred hope, and the days of mourning for the dead began, but were not here ended. His love for Park, and the encouragement he gave him in the prosecution of his researches, together with the sorrow he felt for his fate, forms quite a beautiful and touching episode in the life of the subject of this memoir.

You have not walked a mile from the native place of Park when you are confronted on the left with the ruins of Newark Castle, with which the readers of 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel' are familiar. It stands somewhat elevated on the banks of the rapid Yarrow, and is thus alluded to by Scott:—

> 'The way was long, the wind was cold,
> The minstrel was infirm and old;
> His withered cheek and tresses gray
> Seemed to have known a better day.
>
> . . . .
>
> He passed where Newark's stately tower
> Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower;
> The minstrel gazed with wistful eye—
> No humbler resting place was nigh.'

But passing rapidly along, and leaving behind us the ducal residence and domain of Bowhill,[1] Oakwood Tower, the supposed residence of the famous wizard Michael Scott, Thirlestane Castle, and many other scenes of border chivalry and beauty, we come to the one spot of that picturesque country side to which Lawson, a kindred spirit, often resorted, and where his favourite exercise of meditation was affectingly engaged in,—the kirk of Ettrick, where the celebrated Thomas Boston so long held forth the word of life; and its kirk-yard, where his mortal remains rest awaiting the resurrection of the just. He needs not that tasteful monument to keep him in our memories. He will live there so long as the 'Fourfold State' and the 'Crook in the Lot' are read; and read these matchless books shall be, while the English language lasts, and while the grace of God is continued with men. In the pre-

[1] A palace of the Duke of Buccleuch.

sent day another interesting spot here engages the attention of tourists,—the cottage near the kirk, where Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, was born. But Lawson took his friends to visit and pray over Boston's grave. Boston was a divine according to Lawson's own heart, and, in common with all sound Calvinists, he revered highly the memory of a man whose writings had done so much for the preservation and diffusion of sound doctrine all over the country. It is believed that at one time a copy of his 'Fourfold State' was to be found in almost every cottage in Scotland. He died just as the Secession Church was about to be born; and no doubt is entertained but that he would have come out with the 'four fathers' had he lived, and joined issue with them in that blissful event. His name, at any rate, is now inseparably linked with perhaps the most marked man of the generation that followed him. The two names of Boston and Lawson sounded long and loud in the ears, at least of the people of Ettrick Forest and Selkirkshire at large. No two men, perhaps, in the same district, have ever been so successful in their Master's work. The effects of Boston's ministry had by no means decayed when Lawson appeared on the field, and set the same Gospel trumpet to his mouth, and made it give out the same certain sound, and with the same decided emphasis. Many a true Christian was reared in the Forest, and in the lower parts of the county, by these distinguished men of God; and 'a seed' still exists in these parts, and probably shall exist to the latest generation. Let the *dilettante*, the 'minions of luxury,' turn away, disaffected, from such rambles and scenes and associations as these. The genuine lovers of the patriarchal, the simple, and the sincere in godliness, will account them more suggestive of the sublime and beautiful in God's eternal truth, than all the pompous rituals, solemn architecture, and sunny skies of other and distant climes.

But Dr Lawson has scarcely less interesting associations with the localities and objects that lie to the east of Selkirk.

from the confluence of the Ettrick with the Tweed, to Abbotsford and Melrose. 'Old Mortality' did not hinder him from accompanying his friends to the temple of the Wizard, which stands upon a beautifully wooded sloping bank, washed by 'Tweed's silvery streams.' And here both he and they could well expatiate on this world's vain show. Though living so near to each other, and mutually acquainted with, and admirers of each other's peculiar gifts and graces, Sir Walter Scott and Dr Lawson seldom met. This is to be regretted. Had Scott known more of Lawson, his congenial love of ancient scholarship and ready appreciation of idiosyncrasies in character, would have drawn him frequently into the society of so much wisdom and learning, conjoined with so much naturalness and *bonhommie.* Lawson had a most just appreciation of the genius of Scott in all its relations to the fine arts, and especially in its bearings upon the morals of the age; and he would not have hesitated, had they been brought into fellowship, to have given the novelist and the poet the benefit at once of his love and his rod.

To the Eildon Hills, however (the Tremontium of the Romans), and to the grand old abbey at their base, would the Ettrick pastor more enthusiastically conduct his friends and brethren, where they would refresh themselves after study and work amid the beautiful environs of Selkirk. He himself was particularly fond of visiting Melrose Abbey. It was not because his patriotism was rekindled beside the urn where the heart of King Robert Bruce is supposed to lie, nor because of the tombs and crypts where so many of the old Scotch nobles have been buried, nor because of the numerous specimens of Gothic art which seem as if—

> 'Some fairy's hand
> 'Twixt poplars straight the osier wand
> In many a freakish knot had twined;
> Then formed a spell, when the work was done,
> And changed the willow wreaths to stone.'

It was from his curious and admiring interest in this remnant of ancient magnificence and beauty, as an incentive to devout thought. He told Dr Belfrage, that, 'while tracing the various parts of its exquisite workmanship, he would contrast what he saw with Ezekiel's temple, so minutely described in the last part of his prophecy, and made the one aid his conceptions of the other.' Thus, while the antiquary marks in it only its memorials of the olden time, its roofs sculptured with sacred history, the remarkable events of which it has been the scene, and the interesting pilgrims that have resorted to it,—and while the poet has brought before the fancy its priests in their vestments, its choir resounding with grave sweet melody, warriors consecrating their swords at its shrine, nobles uttering their vows at its altars, the dead interred with sacred pomp within its precincts, the moon gleaming on its arches and its pillars, and the rushing of the waters by its side, when 'the deep uttered its voice and lifted up its hands on high,'—to Dr Lawson it suggested contemplations more solemn and important, and pointed them to that fabric which shall endure for ever, which is built on the foundations of the apostles and prophets, and of which Jesus Christ Himself is the chief corner-stone.

In these days Dryburgh Abbey contained not the ashes of the mighty enchanter—Sir Walter was still casting his spells from Abbotsford over Europe. But there were other reasons sufficiently powerful to interest Dr Lawson in the venerable pile, and attract him to its richly wooded environs. He could follow the beautiful Leader in its meanderings, gaze upon the ruins of the Rhymer's Tower, enter the Abbey itself, and look upon the high altar beneath which the last of the Abbots was buried. A more peculiar gratification, however, was his, to go up to the tomb where the Erskines lay, or out towards the Mansion House of Dryburgh, where Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine were brought up. It was a solace to his mind, amid much that memorialized the dark and disastrous ages of the Church, to adore the wisdom and prudence of her only Head,

in baptizing these fathers of the Scottish Secession with the Spirit, that stirred up the solitary monk to 'contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.'

Having taken possession of the manse, the young minister was expected forthwith to bring home to it one who should share with him in its joys and sorrows. Several years, however, passed away, and he seemed to be as far from the purpose of matrimony as ever. The fact is, the man was wedded in heart and soul to his ministry and his books; and it was conjectured that, unless he was prompted in the matter by some kind friend, he might remain a *Benedict* all his days. Whether it be duty or not for ministers to marry *immediately* after ordination, may be questioned. In general, they are at such an early period, without experience and without money. Faithfulness seems to demand that, first of all, they should get themselves fairly and firmly seated in their office, accumulate wisdom and books, and be to some extent aware 'quod valiant humeri.' Their stipends (unless in cities now) are but scanty, and were still more so in Lawson's days. Yet it must ever abide a mysterious problem how, on such limited means, they manage to preserve such a respectable social position. The barrel of meal and the cruise of oil in the manse, are seldom if ever exhausted. The pastor in Selkirk had but a moderate income, and he considered it to be his duty to have his house comfortably furnished, and his library well stocked with books, ere he contracted engagements that should, by increasing his expenditure, uncomfortably limit his freedom. At length, however, that most interesting event, the minister's marriage, became the subject of gossip. It is said that he was urged to the step by some considerate friend, who proffered also his advice as to the quarter where success was probable. It is likely that on this simple circumstance arose the story that is still current, of his session having taken up the matter and undertaken to carry it through. It is said that a deputation of their number waited upon their good and

simple minister, and, having broached it to him, offered their friendly help. Mr Lawson seemed in no ways to be taken by surprise, and asked them if they could tell him where he was likely to find a good wife. They at once mentioned a particular family, where were several daughters, any one of whom might suit. Acting on this, Mr Lawson (so goes the story) called ere long at the house where these fair ones resided. He inquired first for the oldest, to whom he stated his wishes, but was unsuccessful; he then proposed to the second, who also refused him; and finally he sent for and agreed with the third, who soon became Mrs Lawson. We have every reason to believe that this is entirely mythical. When Dr Kidston told him that these and such like stories were current, he replied, 'I know I was, and am still, very stupid about many worldly things, but I am certainly not such a fool as these things, if true, would prove me to be.' It has been rather positively asserted, that he did forget his marriage-day. To be out of the way, it is told, when a bridegroom, he paid a visit to his friend Mr Greig, of Lochgelly, not intending to return till he should bring his bride with him. The marriage had been fixed to take place at Peebles on a Tuesday forenoon. On that same forenoon, while engaged in interesting conversation, he suddenly exclaimed, 'Mr Greig, is not this my marriage-day?' Thereupon he got all things ready, and set off for Peebles, which he reached in the evening. The affronted fair one would not receive him, and he had to go back to Selkirk minus a 'better half.' If this story be true, he does not stand alone as a culpable *absentee* on the marriage-day. The Rev. Sir Harry Moncreiff told Lord Cockburn, that after he had married a late Lord Meadowbank, his Lordship mysteriously disappeared on the same evening, and, when searched for, was found busily engaged in the composition of a metaphysical essay 'on pains and penalties.'

When Mr Lawson did marry, he found a wife among his own people. She was the daughter of Mr Rogers, a most

respectable citizen and banker in Selkirk; a young lady of personal accomplishments, of unfeigned piety, and of most amiable disposition and manners. Their union promised to be the blessedness of their earthly pilgrimage. All uncertainties and anxieties on the matter being now completely laid aside, Mr Lawson went again in heart and soul to his much-loved work; and, for a time, 'table-talk' about the manse and the young wife was at an end. But, alas! it was only for a short time. In less than a year from their marriage, Mrs Lawson died—died unexpectedly, and childless. The young widower had a feeling heart, and this death-stroke for a time almost prostrated him. On coming out of the partial stupor into which it cast him, he calmly said to the friend beside him, 'I am soothed by the belief that my dear deceased wife is now far happier with her divine and everlasting Husband, than she ever could have been with me.'

This was the first session of Lawson at the college of affliction. He had passed through other preparatory ordeals, —he had studied and he had prayed,—but his Master would now have him tried in the furnace. To Luther's 'Meditatio' and 'Precatio,' was added the third and last, and perhaps best preparation of all, God's 'Tentatio.' In the life of Dr Adam Clarke it is beautifully stated, that 'it is requisite that he who is to be a judge of so many cases of conscience should clearly understand them. But is this possible, unless he have passed through those states and circumstances in which these cases are founded? I trow not. He who has not been deeply exercised in the furnace of affliction and trial, is never likely to be a workman that "needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." How can a man inexperienced in spiritual trials build up the Church of Christ?' The wisdom and sympathies indispensable to an efficient pastorate were never acquired in books or seminaries of learning. Hence it is observable that young ministers are frequently made to feel the truth of their Master's promise, 'In the

world ye shall have tribulation.' In after years, many a good and holy man has had to bless God for the yoke he had to bear in his youth—for the spiritual alembic in which the straying and strong passions of that period are finely filtered. Learning and philosophy are, in their own places, highly valuable; but when called upon to discharge the more private, delicate, and difficult duties of a Christian minister, they are useless. 'It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation *perfect through sufferings*.' Sad and pensive, then, was the solitary of the manse from the day that he laid his young bride in an early grave; but the people in the sanctuary were made to drink the new wine of his crushed heart. There was not such a thorough and awful change in his habits of thought and social manners, as took place in Dr Brown's case, when the 'desire of his eyes' was removed by a stroke. There was a wondering child at hand to hear and to record the shriek of nature which rose in the Biggar manse, when the lovely and the beloved sufferer on that sofa bade them all in this world farewell. There was none such here. But, from what is known of the man, it is sure that the silent cry of distress mounted to the ear of the Lord God of Sabaoth, as her spirit left him alone. As we shall see in the sequel, however, this was but the beginning of his troubles. Other billows were rolling towards him. To them all he meekly bowed the head, and, loud though the storm was, men ever heard him say in its midst, 'Thy will be done.'

Having fulfilled the years of mourning for his first love, he was married again. The object of his second choice was a daughter of the Rev. Mr Moir, his immediate predecessor, who is said to have inherited many of her father's amiable and attractive accomplishments and virtues. She, too, had been married, and at an early age, to the Rev. Mr Dickson, of Berwick, a young minister who is reported to have possessed

very commanding eloquence, and to have been distinguished by fervent piety and excellent dispositions. He was permitted to describe a very brief course. His light was just dawning upon the churches when God removed him to shine in the temple not made with hands. His young and afflicted widow went to reside in Edinburgh, and became a member of Bristo Street Church, over which the late Rev. Dr Peddie had been recently ordained. Sometime in 1783 they were married by Dr Peddie. Prepared by severe affliction to enter upon the duties of life with moderate expectations, and with holy purposes to become helps meet for one another, they lived together, from this time, in great conjugal happiness, till it pleased God again to turn the joys of his handmaid into the sorrows of widowhood. The fruit of this union was a family of three sons and five daughters, the early and interesting deaths of some of whom shall furnish no small portion of the shady side of this memoir. Leaving the domestic history for the present, we continue the narrative of his ministry.

Dr Lawson went very seldom abroad. His happiness lay in and around Selkirk. His excursions were not usually extended beyond the neighbouring parishes, and these only when called upon to assist his brethren at the dispensation of the Lord's Supper. Indeed, it formed one of the highest social enjoyments of his life, to meet with his clerical friends upon such occasions. During his long and somewhat retired life, these meetings made up the all of what may be called his 'foreign affairs.' Travelling, in his day, was expensive and inconvenient: hence, compared with their frequency of intercourse now, Christian brethren very seldom met. The mutual assistance they rendered each other at the dispensation of the Lord's Supper, was therefore hailed as affording them also precious opportunities of devout and friendly fellowship. Besides, at that time, even this rich Christian and social treat was but seldom enjoyed. In some parts of the country, for a time after our fathers seceded from the Established Church,

the Lord's Supper was dispensed only once a year. By and by it came to be dispensed twice, and it is only a modern improvement to have it four times a year. These sacramental occasions were, consequently, anticipated and prepared for, weeks, nay, months before they took place; and happy and holy meetings they were to all concerned, people and pastors. As the mode of conducting such solemnities which then obtained, has almost entirely gone out, I shall endeavour to give an account of one of them, so that our memories of the past may include scenes of hallowed interest to our fathers.

Let us describe, for example, a summer sacrament in the Burgher Church of Dunfermline, such as Dr Lawson often took part in, and which was fading away when I first began to observe with some little intelligence. The month of June was chosen, as promising the most propitious weather. The neighbouring ministers of the Secession were all engaged to come and perform their several parts, and the one distinguished stranger, from Edinburgh, Glasgow, or elsewhere, was also secured. The services of the grand occasion commenced on the Thursday preceding, which was observed as a day of humiliation and prayer—the 'Fast-day,' as it was called. The minister of the congregation usually conducted the devotional services, making confessions and supplications on behalf of their people; and two of the brethren in the neighbourhood preached, the one in the forenoon, and the other in the afternoon. All worldly business was suspended during the day, and the evening was devoted to self-examination and reading and prayer. On the Friday evening there was another diet of public worship, presided over by one of the ministers, who was to remain and work over the occasion. By Saturday morning, 'the tent,' as it was called, had been erected at the north end of the large park immediately behind the church. This 'tent' was a huge and awkward-looking moveable pulpit, from which sermons were preached to the thousands who assembled from a radius of ten or twelve miles all round,

and who could not be accommodated in the church. Its use on the *Saturdays* and *Mondays* was given up latterly; but, for many years, the crowds that came so early as Saturday and waited over Monday, made it a necessity. On the afternoon of Saturday two sermons were preached in the church by two of the assistants, and the 'tent preaching' went on simultaneously. Then came the Sabbath! the sacrament Sabbath! the *June* sacrament Sabbath! And, if the day turned out, as then it almost always did, propitious as to weather, it proved indeed to be a 'high day.' Early in the morning, from all the congregations in the neighbourhood, groups of families were seen quietly and happily finding their way into the town, and finally taking up their position for the day on the green where the tent was erected. At that time it was customary to have no public religious services in any of the sister churches whose ministers were to be assisting in Dunfermline. This was owing partly to the habits of the people in attending there during the communion, and partly to the difficulty of finding pulpit supply. Preachers, or probationers, as they were called, were 'few and far between.' These 'tribes of the Lord' came from Stirling, Alloa, and Kincardine on the west—from Kirkcaldy, Crossgates, and Lochgelly on the east—from Kinross, and even Perth, on the north—and from Inverkeithing, Queensferry, and Limekilns on the south. Their ministers preceded, or sometimes accompanied them. Besides the two stated ministers, Dr Husband and Mr Macfarlane, there were almost invariably the ministers of Inverkeithing, Limekilns, Crossgates, Lochgelly, Kirkcaldy, Kinross, and Kincardine, together with one distinguished stranger from a distance. Among my latest and somewhat misty reminiscences in connection with an occasion of this kind, are the following: The late Dr Hay, of Kinross, preached on the Fast-day, and he most ably discoursed on the sublime scenes of the transfiguration. The late Dr Beattie, of Glasgow, preached on the Friday evening from these words, 'Why

stand ye here all the day idle?'—and a most powerful sermon it was felt to be—given out with all the unction and fervour of that pulpit oratory which kept one of the largest congregations in Glasgow hanging upon his lips, to the end of a long and most faithful pastorate. He was then the minister of the Burgher Church at Kincardine, and deemed it one of the high honours of his life that he was permitted in his youth to take, however humble a part in 'the work' with such men, and at such seasons. On the Saturday, the first sermon was preached by the late Mr Haddin of Limekilns, who discoursed from the words, 'Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?' His meek, Nathanael-like appearance, greatly aided to give emphasis to the rich and savoury evangel which he then poured forth. He was followed by Mr Brown, of Inverkeithing, whose subject has escaped my memory. But who that knew or ever heard that prince of Gospel preachers, can doubt of its appropriateness and Gospel majesty. Dr Husband and Mr Macfarlane, the collegiate pastors of Queen Anne Street Church, took the presidency in these communions by turns. On the occasion referred to, my father presided, and, consequently, took the lead in the services of the day. That large and spacious church was crowded. There could not be less than two thousand there, consisting almost entirely of the regular congregation. His text I have also forgotten; but the 'action sermon,' as it was termed, was an eloquent and most cordially delivered message of Divine love, listened to breathlessly, and many wept. He had a fine stately appearance, and a noble voice, the very whispers of which could be distinctly heard in every corner of the building The present day by no means monopolizes pulpit oratory and fervour. After the action sermon was preached, came the service called 'fencing the tables' (devotional services, of course, alternated with all the addresses). This was usually done by the presiding minister. It consisted, long ago, in a description of the characters who were not worthy to sit down at the Lord's table;

and then, in the second place, of those who were worthy. The history of this unseasonable interruption is simply this. At the origin of the Secession, multitudes left the Established Church who could not obtain the necessary certificate of church membership; and the resort of the conscientious seceding pastors, on sacramental occasions, was to this practice. They made their solemn appeals to the consciences of the people, and left the responsibility with them. By and by, as matters were brought into order, tokens of admission to the ordinances were given only to those who, on examination, were found to be 'worthy.' The 'fencing service,' however, was still kept up. It did good,—and, if rightly timed, such as on the afternoon of the Sabbath previous to the sacrament, must do good; but the seasonableness of it now, *immediately* before the ordinance, and after the communicants have taken their seats, may be questioned. It is doubtful if these '*debarrances*' (another name for this peculiar service) ever kept away one who had determined to communicate; and we have heard of some really devout people, whose comfort at the table was greatly disturbed by it. It greatly depended, indeed, on the manner in which it was gone about. For the most part, as far as the very original mode of its performance goes, we have reason to conclude that it was often useless, itself sometimes neutralizing itself. An anecdote of these times will explain this remark. An old man, who had just been listening to one of these '*debarrances*,' was asked what he thought of it. He replied, 'I can make nothing of it at all; that man (the minister) first shooed (drove) us a' out of the tables, and then he just shooed us a' in again.' The zeal of our worthy fathers sometimes carried them the length of 'debarring' from the Lord's table, not only such men and women as were ungodly and profligate, but also the devil himself, and the Pope. Let us not, however, undervalue their conscientious, and, to a great extent, indispensable efforts at that time, to throw a fence around the Lord's table, and

thus to preserve purity of communion. We believe they did their best, and from the best of motives; and to a large extent they did good.

Immediately after the tables were thus fenced, the minister left the pulpit, and took his place in a small desk in front of the precentor, and with the 'tables' before him. The 'table-seats' were large square pews, stretching from the pulpit right up to the back-wall of the church. At the sacraments, the partitions were taken out, so as to constitute one long pew. There was one such pew to the right, and one to the left of the minister; and a broad passage, running up between them, allowed the elders to lift the tokens and superintend the circulation of the symbolic elements. After the usual preliminary services of reading the scriptural warrant, prayer, and a short address, the elements were given by the pastor to the individuals sitting at the ends of the tables nearest to the pulpit. So soon as this table was served, another short parting address was given, and then two verses of a psalm were sung. During the singing of these, the communicants retired from the table by the doors at the farther end, and others, coming in by side passages to the right and left of the pulpit, took their places; and when the table was again filled, the same procedure was gone about. Dr Husband now took the chair, and conducted the services of the second table, with all that dignity and solemnity of manner for which he was remarkable. After him came in succession the assistant ministers, who addressed the communicants, and dispensed the bread and wine as long as it was necessary. On such occasions there were sometimes no less than ten or twelve table-services; and fully a hundred members sat down each time. In this method there was much to complain of. There was noise and confusion, and a good deal of uncomfortable pressure in going into and retiring from the table of the Lord. But there was much to command respect, and even to produce solemnity. There was, especially, something very impressive

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In concluding the Catal
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up to the back-wall of t the skin, the tepid bath, e
partitions were taken o able, and noon is the best .
There was one such pe st digestion is over: brisk f
the minister; and a br this tepid bath will be found
allowed the elders to fatigue from long continued
lation of the symboli skin, &c. Then the tepid or
services of reading t her will also benefit the person
address, the elemen stimulant, and as its object is to
viduals sitting at t and the general vital action, the
So soon as this ta ong enough in it to cause exhaus-
dress was given, a would be a proper time to stay in it.
During the singin s, &c. ence over those organs between the
the table by the ure should not exceed 90° Fahrenheit, When a bath is employed to
in by side passag ould sit half an hour or longer, ac-
their places; an s the blood to settle for a time in and
procedure was g draws the blood from other parts. The
and conducted t ough to redden the skin, and the vessel
dignity and sol and dimensions to permit the water
able. After hin old applied to the forehead and temples
who addressed t e hot water helps powerfully. Salt and
and wine as lon en with good effect—a table-spoonful or
there were som f water. The legs and feet should be
services; and ful d woollen stockings worn after the bath, go to bed immediately afterwards. When ded to assist perspiration, the legs should e invalid feels faint.

In this method th the liver, torpor chiefly, the Nitro ive table- is very useful. To make known each time. noise and confusio very gallon of water, th plain of. There was in going into and cid to each gallon of of uncomfortable pressure there was much to his medicated should be the table of the Lord. But and respect, and even to produce solemnity. There was, especially, something very impressive

in the singing of the psalms by the retiring and incoming communicants. They generally kept to one psalm—the 22d of the Scotch version—and sung two verses at the filling up of each table, before the 'table-address' was given. If they finished that psalm before all the members had communicated, the 103d was selected. The tune invariably sung, from the beginning to the end of the table-services, was 'Coleshill,' a tune on the minor key, and by many godly Seceders almost identified with communion work. When all was over at the table, my father again ascended the pulpit, and gave what were called the 'evening directions,'—a series of exhortations to those who had been at the table, as to the duties and trials awaiting them in the world. Then came the grand wind-up of the day's work, the evening sermon. This was preached by my grandfather, Dr Husband, the senior pastor. His text was (the last we remember having heard him preach from), 'Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.' By this time it might be seven or eight o'clock. The services had been going on all day at the tent; one minister after another publishing to the people who could not find admission into the church, the glad tidings of salvation. But, towards evening, many of them turned their faces homeward, speaking to one another of redeeming love, and sometimes kneeling down together in prayer by the wayside; others sought their way into the church again, to hear what was always understood to be one of the high things of the sacrament—the evening sermon. And on this evening they were not disappointed: for (albeit too young to judge) I will never forget the beauty of the style, the pathos of the appeals, and the swelling eloquence of that grand singer in Israel. I think I have never heard its equal since, and scarce expect again to be similarly affected. All was over about nine or ten o'clock,—the work having gone on without a moment's interruption

from ten o'clock in the forenoon. Considering the number of table-services, this was not an unseemly time for dismissal. Great indiscretion, however, sometimes showed itself at other country sacraments in these parts, in the matter of *lengthy* work. A well-known and truthful story is told of Mr Kyle, erewhile the Burgher minister of Kinross before Dr Hay. He contrived, at one time, to lengthen out the services of his summer sacrament, so as that the 'evening sermon' was not begun till past *twelve o'clock*. Dr Husband was to be the preacher, and he mounted the pulpit in no pleased mood, as he was rather finically set against such impropriety. His text was, 'Let not your good be evil spoken of;' and he commenced and closed in this laconic manner: 'Brethren, the best practical use I can make of my text is simply to repeat the particulars on which, had time permitted, I would have preached.' He, then, in half a minute, went over his 'heads;' and, having pronounced the blessing, dismissed the congregation, greatly to the chagrin of Mr Kyle, honest man, who had been gloating over the idea of the sun's being risen on Lochleven before the work could be concluded. It is said he never forgave Dr Husband for this.

Whatever occasion Burns might have had for the profane caricature of his 'Holy Fair' (the nickname he gives to an Ayrshire summer sacrament), he would have found no justification for it in this Fifeshire solemnity. As far as I can remember, and from all I ever heard, matters were conducted —especially where it was feared unseemly things might occur in the tent-green—with great propriety. There might be the ordinary carelessness in hearing, and perhaps a mistake might take place in the sober conduct of a few; but, on the whole, the demeanour of these multitudes of worshippers was most becoming. Many of them, at the tent, kept their position from morn to night, having engaged in all the devotions, and heard every sermon that was preached, till the intimation was given that the 'evening sermon' was about to begin in the

church. No police were required to keep order. I recollect simply of the salutary awe under which the youngsters, who were rather restless and migratory, were kept by the tent-green keepers, who had staffs in their hands, and quietly pursued any who were misbehaving. These men used to touch gently with their staffs any whom the heat of the day or prolonged attention had rendered drowsy, or, more sharply such of us as might be disturbing the people. They got the name of the '*nappies*' from this use of their staffs, and were indeed 'a terror to evil doers.' There no doubt were sometimes unseemly interruptions to the solemnity of these services. It was impossible to prevent improper characters from mingling with the crowds, and their ejection was frequently necessary. This gave rise to many stories which were told to bring ridicule upon the Seceders. Some, however, are authentic, and are certainly exceedingly graphic. There was one person rather conspicuous at tent preachings in the south country in these times, named 'Jamie Scott,' whose zeal was more potent than his judgment. It happened on one occasion that the preacher was much disturbed by the sudden appearance of some pigs on the hill-side where the tent was erected; the shepherds' dogs beheld them, and commenced to bark, and to show symptoms of giving chase. The preacher asked if some one would try and get the pigs removed. Jamie Scott sprang to his feet, and securing his staff, exclaimed, 'I will go, sir, against these animals. They were forbidden under the law, and the deil was in them under the Gospel; but, by the grace of God, I will scatter them abroad.' And with that he set off and effected the clearance. The service then proceeded. At another time Jamie had thought it proper to strike a man whose conduct at the tent was displeasing to him; but the man was disposed to give battle, and, securing a pitchfork which was at hand, he pursued Jamie out of the tent-ground, who fled in terror. As the avenger neared him, Jamie became alarmed, and, drawing out

from his bosom a long tin pen-case, common then, he turned quickly round, and presented it, exclaiming, 'The sword of the Lord and of Gideon! the sword of the Lord and of Gideon!' His pursuer, imagining that it was a pistol, and thrown off his guard by the solemnity of the cry, turned upon his heels and fled. Such things, however, were very rare.

The sacrament Sabbath evening in the manse, after family worship was over, and the '*cœna*' had been eaten, was devoted to conversation upon the precious privileges of the day, and, above all, to the high sounding praises of the 'Lamb' that had been slain. Monday dawned. The tent-green was again resorted to, and one or two sermons were preached. In the church the two senior assistants presided. At this time, and, generally speaking, for many years, these were Mr Greig, of Lochgelly, and Mr Brown, of Inverkeithing. The text of the latter I have forgotten, but Mr Greig's I vividly recollect. His text was, 'For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father,' from which he delivered one of his usual most profound and solemn discourses, overflowing with divinity, and marking out with the hand of a master the way of the soul to God.

The distinguished strangers that joined this band of holy men in these days, and upon these occasions, were generally Drs Hall and Peddie, and Mr Lothian, of Edinburgh; Dr Dick, of Glasgow; Dr Belfrage, of Falkirk; Dr Smart, of Stirling; and Dr Lawson, of Selkirk;—and a grand set of godly men they were: their savour is not yet passed away; nor, within the Church that owned them, can their superiors even yet be found.

They all dined together on the Monday afternoon, and luxuriated for an hour or two in the pure relaxations of Christian sociality. The time was spent as became men who had been so occupied for days past. Not a word was spoken but what was seasoned with salt, and not the shade of any excess ever brooded over their saintly festivities. And when

at length the hour of parting came, they all sung an hymn, and, having knelt in prayer together, each man went unto his own home.

Such are somewhat faint recollections of a Secession summer sacrament. Changes have taken place since in our mode of observing the Supper which are decided improvements. Nevertheless, we should come short of gratitude, if we did not cherish with some degree of admiring appreciation the almost patriarchal simplicity of the times we have looked back upon, and the really apostolic authority wherewith our fathers impressed the solemnities of our faith.

Such like at Selkirk, and in his own country-side, were the communion seasons over which Dr Lawson's spirit rejoiced. And these rejoicings were almost wholly confined to his own and adjacent counties. He sometimes assisted at Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dunfermline, and Lochgelly, but not often. Full of rich memories, however, of the sage of Ettrick, are Stow, Peebles, Galashiels, Lauder, Newtown, Kelso, Jedburgh, Dunse, Stitchel, Coldstream, etc. The pleasing and almost solemn associations of his name and holy wisdom, with their best and happiest ideas of sacramental work, have not yet ceased to retain him in their reverence and love.

Dr Lawson was once, but once only, in the great metropolis. London is now, by reason of the railway, almost at our door. A visit to it is, therefore, not much thought of. Everybody goes up, and hence the charm and importance of a visit have fled. It was far different in the days of Lawson. To go to London was an occasion for the whole neighbourhood to talk about; it was an event, if not an era in one's life. Our fathers had to make their wills ere they left home, and took farewell as if their return was very problematical; and when they did go, they did not return in such a hurry as we do. The *cost* of travelling made it proper that the cause for travelling should be unusually important. We read of some ministers, in the days we refer to, going up purely on personal grounds, to see

the world, and enjoy its pleasures; to make the acquaintance of statesmen, or players, or opera-dancers; and then, having discussed so many political or church questions, together with so many bottles of claret, they returned, not to bless, but to chill, their households and their churches. It was not so with Dr Lawson upon the only occasion on which he went up to the metropolis. He was sent up by the Synod to supply the pulpit of Wells Street, during the illness of the Rev. Archibald Hall, its first minister. This was only a few years after his ordination. We have no record of his previous preparations, nor even of his sayings and doings in that great city. He confined himself very much to his duties to the congregation, and was frequently with the truly excellent man whose pulpit he supplied. Mr Hall died, while Dr Lawson was in London, upon the 6th May 1778. He was a man of decided talent; and though the period of his ministry in London was comparatively short, he speedily commanded for himself a high place among the brethren in the metropolis. He was the author of several excellent works, but is best known for his 'Gospel Worship.' He died in the forty-second year of his age, but seemed ripe for glory. When dying, he said, 'I see no other warrant, nor indeed any need of another warrant, to believe my salvation by grace, to expect victory over death, and to appropriate eternal life, besides the free and faithful exhibition which God makes to me as a sinner, of Jesus Christ, and all things with Him. O that the view of things which stand clear to my understanding, may be the daily ministration of the Spirit, and of all His saving and precious fruits to my soul! In the view of these truths, I hope to say, Farewell time and all its vanities, welcome eternity and all its realities! The springs of life are wasting, though under many merciful circumstances, which render the decay comparatively very easy to nature. I have long believed the truth of the union between Christ and His people. I saw it was manifestly a Scripture doctrine; I believed it to

be a very important one; but I think one consolation from it opens, of late, on my mind with a kind of evidence and satisfaction which I never before perceived. By this union, Christ's righteousness is my righteousness, His death my death, His life my life, His glory my glory! Here I often solace myself. In this medium, death and the grave are divested of all their gloom; judgment appears to be a joyful solemnity; eternity a delightful, boundless object of expectation and desire. If ye love Me, ye would not weep, but rejoice, because I say, I go to My Father.'

No information remains as to Dr Lawson's visit to the capital. It would have been peculiarly gratifying to have heard his remarks on men and manners there. His observation must have been keenly exercised, and his pious philanthropy greatly stimulated, as he walked through those endless and crowded streets, and gazed for months on its palaces, and princes, and people; on its churches, institutions, and courts; on its riches and its poverty; on its virtues and its vices. Of this one thing, however, we may be assured; he was not guilty of that contemptible flunkeyism which dances attendance on the great, which seeks importance by sinking its manhood. He had no business either with Prime Ministers or Scotch Peers. He neither patronized the drama nor the opera; and had he written the memoirs of his own life, he could not have recorded, as a neighbour of his did, that 'the theatre was the richest source of my amusement in London.'[1] But one incident survives of his six months' residence in London. He had been invited to dinner with a family, where he was to meet Dr Hunter, at that time a minister in high popularity. From the simplicity of his appearance and manners, Dr Hunter thought him a fit subject for his wit, and treated him rather with rude freedom. Dr Lawson felt his indignation kindled, and thought not only of repelling his insolence, but of exposing him to shame on account of the spirit he had

[1] Dr Somerville, p. 157.

manifested, and the claims he had advanced. But this reflection, he said, made him let him alone—'London is the scene of his duties,—what I say may injure his usefulness. His reflections can do me no harm. It will be far better for me to gain a victory over myself than over him.' He received, some time after his return, a long letter from the Rev. John Newton, from which it appears that he had made the acquaintance of that justly esteemed minister of the Lord Jesus. It would have greatly enriched this memoir if Dr Lawson's letters to him had survived. The admirable and characteristic epistle from the author of 'Cardephonia' amply repays perusal. The principles and objects of the Evangelical Alliance are anticipated in every line.

The following is the only letter of Dr Lawson's we have found, in which the London visit is referred to :—

'SELKIRK, *June* 31, 1801.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—I need not say that your last favour, as usual, afforded me much pleasure. I quite agree with what you say of the distance of time between your first and second visit to London. How many of our friends have been removed from our eyes in the space of twenty-three years! How soon will an equal space of time glide away! Who will be found living in the world at the end of it? Why are men so infatuated as not to live in a constant readiness for that day which will remove them for ever from all earthly connections? Often have I thought of some of our dear London friends, whom we must see no more till our eyes are closed in death. London would now be a dreary place for me, till I had spent some weeks in it; but I have good cause to believe that those whom I most loved are now angels in heaven. When twenty-three years more have passed, it is probable that you and I will be with them. Some of our survivors will talk of us with regret, but we will think of them with compassion. I hope you will remind my remaining

friends of my name, and of my regard for them. Messrs Hastie, Auld, Tassie, Mrs Scott, Mr and Mrs Wilkie, are now almost my only remaining friends in London. It would afford me great pleasure to spend, were it possible, a few weeks with you and our clerical brethren, and my other remaining London friends. May the influences of the Holy Spirit be richly dispensed to them all, and to the beloved friend to whom I now write!—Yours most sincerely,

'G. LAWSON.'

CHAPTER III.

THE MINISTER AND HIS WAYS.

Various anecdotes connected with Dr Lawson's ministry at Selkirk have been abroad ever since he left the world. Many of these are highly characteristic, alike of pastor and people. They, no doubt, refer to different periods of his life; but it is perhaps the best plan to introduce them at this stage of the memoir. Every care has been taken to reject the spurious, and to insert only such as are considered authentic by his friends. We shall reserve such as are illustrative of his professorial peculiarities till we come to narrate the 'Hall' life at Selkirk. It may be simply premised, that none of these anecdotes, discovered to be genuine, compromises, in the slightest degree, the character which he bore through life for great propriety of demeanour. He greatly succeeded in never allowing 'his good to be evil spoken of.' There were certainly modes of expression, at that period generally received as both courteous and sensible, to which modern fastidiousness might except; but the reader will find very few even of these in what follows. They are all very like the man, and serve more than any elaborate description to bring out his simplicity of character, his amazing knowledge of Scripture, and manly sagacity. 'Anecdotes, it has been said, if true and alive, are always valuable; the man in the concrete, the *totus quis*, comes out in them.'[1]

Dr Lawson's call to Selkirk had been unanimous. There was only one individual opposed to it, who took every oppor-

[1] Dr John Brown's letter to Dr Cairns.

tunity to annoy the young minister. On one occasion, when on a diet of pastoral visitation, he came to this person's house, and being desirous of conciliating him, he entered into conversation with him in a very frank and friendly style. His mildness, however, had no mollifying effect: this person watched every opportunity to contradict and find fault with him. At length captiousness had the effrontery to assert that the young minister had actually told a lie since entering the house, when he meekly said—

'I am not aware of having committed so grave a misdemeanour as that with which you charge me.'

'Yes,' rejoined the man, 'you have; for, when I asked you to stay and take tea with us, you replied that you would not, and yet you have done both: is not this something like telling a lie?'

'You must have read the story,' answered Mr Lawson, 'of the angels in Sodom, who, when Lot pressed them to enter his house and lodge with him during the night, refused, and said, "Nay; but we will abide in the street all night;" and, instead of doing so, when Lot pressed them much, "they turned in unto him, and entered into his house: and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat." Now, do you suppose that these angels told a lie? No, they only changed their mind; and so I too have just changed my mind, and have remained to partake of your fare.'

This proved a silencer to the individual, who had, in his conceit, opined that he had caught the good man in a snare. The youthful Samson showed that the withes wherewith he was bound were as tow when it toucheth the fire.

It was seldom, if ever, that any one got the better of Dr Lawson in free and easy conversation. A worthy farmer once rather posed him, upon the occasion of one of these visits. He had been asking the farmer why his son was not present,—

'He is out shooting the crows,' was the reply.

'And why does he shoot the crows?' he asked.

'Because they destroy the grain,' said the farmer.

'The crows have as good a right to the grain as you,' rejoined Dr Lawson.

'Ay, sir,' replied the farmer, 'but they do not pay any rent.'

He had a strong aversion to everything like self-confidence or presumption. As he had none himself, he could not well endure it in others. He was once at a funeral in an old deserted churchyard, near Selkirk. He here encountered a person who pretended to be a preacher, in his way, and seemed to himself a man of no small consequence. He began to declaim among the people in the burying-ground, and made sundry rather dogmatical assertions; among others, he declared that he took everything stated in the Bible in an exactly literal sense, and in no other. Dr Lawson, who was within hearing, stepped forward, and simply said, 'It is written in the book of Revelation, that "a great red dragon appeared in heaven, and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth." Now, sir, do ye take that as it stands?' The oracle became dumb.

He was generally very careful to notice, and, in his pulpit instructions, to improve, any providences that were impressing his own or the public mind. During a season of prevailing sickness among the young of the congregation, he intimated one Sabbath, that a prayer-meeting would be held in the course of the week, for the purpose of supplicating the Divine mercy. When he arrived at the church on the night appointed, he found, instead of the thin attendance of the ordinary meetings, that a large audience had assembled. Accordingly, without any premeditation, he entered the pulpit, and preached a long and suitable discourse from 2 Kings iv. 19, 'And he (the child) said unto his father, My head, my head! And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother.' From these words he not only improved the visitation, but

showed how parental solicitude should be directed towards the physical as well as the spiritual welfare of the young and afflicted.

He was once riding down to Newtown, to preach on the Monday after the communion. He was met by some people, who told him that, on the previous day, one of the beams that supported the gallery had given way, and that, though none were killed, some were seriously injured. On entering the pulpit, he read out as his text, 'And David was displeased because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah.' At another time, a wall had fallen near to his own church, and several persons were much hurt. His text on the following Sabbath was 1 Kings xx. 30, 'But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and there a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men that were left.'

He told his students, in one of his lectures on Providence, the following anecdote respecting himself. He was travelling, one stormy day, between Traquair and Selkirk, over Minchmuir, a bleak and solitary mountain, from the summit of which there is a spacious view. He was on horseback, and was ambling along the edge of a steep descent that led into a lonely glen, taking sweet delectation in musing on the scenery around, when a strong puff of wind suddenly uplifted his hat and wig, and twirled them down the declivity far beyond his reach. He stood, exposed to the blast, and knew not what to do. He could not leave the horse alone to pursue the fugitive articles, and it might have cost him his life to have gone over the hill with his head unprotected. Providence, however, had help at hand. A shepherd lad, who was crossing the heights in quest of his flock, came up at the critical moment, at once descended the defile, and recovered both hat and wig. 'I regarded this,' he said, 'as a striking interposition of Divine Providence on my behalf, and I think it worthy of record.'

An earthquake was felt in many parts of Europe in 1801.

He thus alludes to it in a letter to Dr Husband: 'I congratulate you that you are still in the land of the living. I have the more reason to be thankful, on this account, to the God of our lives, as your continuance in this world is necessary to the comfort of my own life. The shock of the earthquake was moderate, and of short continuance; but it was owing to God's mercy that it was less dreadful than those which have been felt at Lisbon or Jamaica. God grant that sinners may be awakened to repentance! Will a man dare to spend his evenings in gambling or drinking, in chambering and wantonness? Will he have security given him that he shall not be awakened from the sleep of the night by the tremendous voice of God, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth?'

Dr Lawson was quite remarkable for the happy use and application of passages of Scripture. He was very ready to do so, but never in such a way as to indicate the slightest irreverence for the Holy Word. The following are authenticated instances. Very soon after he commenced his ministry in Selkirk, he was told by one of his hearers, of rather a consequential turn of mind, that the people were very well pleased with his sermons, but by no means with his texts.

'I should not have wondered,' he replied, 'if they had found fault with my discourses; but why should they find fault with the Word of God?'

'I do not know,' said the petulant individual, 'but that's what they say, and I aye like to speak a' my mind.'

'Do you know,' inquired Dr Lawson, 'what Solomon says of such as you?'

'No,' replied the man. 'And what does Solomon say?'

'He says,' rejoined the doctor, '"A fool uttereth all his mind, but a wise man keepeth it in till after."'

Dr Lawson was never annoyed again by this individual.

On the formation of a church at Galashiels, he chose that uncommon, but most appropriate text, Ezek. xxxii. 22,

'Asshur is there, and all her company.' And when opening the new church at Lauder, he preached from these words in Hosea viii. 14, 'Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples.' From these words he discoursed on the evil and danger of mere formal or ceremonial worship. At another time, he was on his way to preach at Hawick, and was suddenly overtaken by a violent tempest of wind and rain. He was obliged to take refuge in a cottage by the wayside, near Ashkirk. When the storm ceased, he held on his journey. The incident suggested a train of thought which led him to preach from that beautiful text, 'A man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest.' Not very long after the late Dr Thomson of Coldstream had been ordained, he received a visit from the Selkirk Professor when on his way to some communion. It happened to be on a Saturday, when young ministers especially dislike to be intruded upon. Dr Lawson apologized for having so long delayed this piece of courtesy, and for choosing a Saturday to do it. Young Thomson assured him he was only too proud of a visit from such a man.

'I remember,' said Dr Lawson, 'the following story:—One friend called upon another, as I am now doing on you, and in similar circumstances. He said to his young brother, "I may say to you what Paul said to the Thessalonians, 'We would have come unto you once and again, but Satan hindered us.'" "He may have hindered you before," was the reply, "but he has sent you to-day." 'I trust, Mr Thomson, that is not your view of my visit.'

He was once assisting the Rev. Mr Pirie, of Glasgow. On the Monday thereafter, he was sitting, along with Mr Pirie and some others of the brethren, in the vestry. It was not yet time to commence what used to be called 'the last diet;' and the worthy men, at least some of them, were indulging themselves with the pipe. The room was soon nebulous, and one of the party, in allusion to his well-known power to choose

and pick from appropriate texts on sudden emergencies, remarked that it would be difficult for him to choose such a text as would be suitable to the smoky state of the vestry. He made no reply; but in a few minutes ascended the pulpit, and gave out for his text these words, from Psalm cxix. 83, 'For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget Thy statutes;' from which, as usual, he preached a clear, logical, and impressive sermon.

On another occasion he was at the Dunfermline sacrament, and was the guest of his friend Dr Husband. While at breakfast, in the manse, on the Monday following, the news were suddenly brought in of one of Lord Nelson's victories. Regret was expressed that the news had not reached them on the previous day, when they might have been improved to the multitudes that attended from all parts of the surrounding country. Nothing more was said. Dr Lawson was one of the two brethren that had to preach that forenoon. His brethren and the people were astonished when he gave out for his text a passage that referred to the goodness of God in His dealings with nations, and from which he delivered an admirable discourse on the special obligations of Great Britain, in her past history, to the God of salvation.

When Napoleon's cruel wars were causing men to turn pale, he chose one day, for his text, the words, 'I will make thee My battle-axe,' and preached a most assuring sermon from them. He introduced the subject thus:—'Many a man never rises above the condition of a ploughman, who has military talents equal to Napoleon Bonaparte; but, in the providence of God, he has never been called to exercise them. If He required them, He would call them out, and they would fight valiantly. Napoleon has, in the providence of God, done wonderful exploits; and how are we to account for it? Simply by looking at these words, "I will make thee My battle-axe."'

On a certain sacramental occasion he ascended the pulpit

to preach what was called the 'evening sermon.' The minister, however, who preceded him, forgetting that Dr Lawson was to follow, pronounced the blessing, and sat down, under the impression that all was over, and that the congregation would retire. The Professor at once arose and commenced thus:—'My friends, you will no doubt think it strange that the apostolic benediction has been pronounced before the close of the services; but in the 16th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and 20th verse, you will find that Paul pronounces the blessing, and, after adding some important truths, he pronounces it a second time, verse 24th.' He was engaged, on another communion occasion, to give what are called 'the evening directions' after the Lord's supper. But the time was up; and, as he disliked protracted work in the sanctuary, he simply said, 'I do not mean to give you any directions of my own, but "for brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron."' He then read the third chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians, and concluded the diet.

Late one Saturday evening, the London mail, in passing through Selkirk, told the sad tidings that Mr Percival, the Prime Minister, had been assassinated in the lobby of the House of Commons. On the following day he preached from Job xxxiv. 20, 'In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away; and the mighty shall be taken away without hand.' A good judge,[1] who heard this sermon preached, informed the compiler that it was a 'most finished discourse.' Dr Lawson had a marvellous power of seeing quickly through a subject, and readily threw it into shape in consequence of his severely logical mind. The news of Napoleon's banishment to St Helena reached him when on a visit to Annan. He preached, next day, from a tent to two thousand people, taking for his text Jeremiah l. 23, 'The hammer of the whole earth is cut asunder and

[1] Rev. Dr Pringle, of Auchterarder.

broken.' A deep impression was left on the minds of the vast audience. Having lectured through the whole Bible, he, one afternoon, resumed his laborious undertaking, from these words, 'Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hands.'

Dr Lawson, indeed, was through life distinguished for his readiness to speak or preach on any subject. He mentioned to a friend, that, on one occasion, he gave out that his text would be found in a certain chapter and in a certain verse. On turning to the passage he found that he had made a mistake, and that it was not the text from which he had intended to preach. 'Then what did you do?' inquired his friend. 'Why,' he replied, 'what could I do but just preach from the text I had given out?' And he did so, no one but himself being aware of his surprise.

He went, upon one occasion, to assist at the Kelso sacrament. On arriving, he found that Mr Hall had convened a greater number of brethren than he considered necessary for the work. He had not been able to supply his own pulpit for the Sabbath; and it was impressed upon him, that, in the circumstances, he ought not to remain over the Sabbath. Accordingly, he got up early on the Sabbath morning, and announced his purpose to start home for Selkirk. 'You know, brethren,' he said, 'I never like to encourage idleness. In consequence of my being here, my people must be without sermon to-day; and there are plenty of hands here to do all the work required in Kelso. I shall, therefore, take my staff, and walk leisurely away, warning by the road as many of my people as I can conveniently reach.' He did so,—and by the time he got to Selkirk, a goodly number had been brought together, to whom, with great power, he ministered the usual diets of public worship.

He went, on one occasion, to Stitchel to meet Dr Waugh, who had come down from London to pass a few weeks amid the beautiful and healthy scenery of his native country. By

this time young Waugh had been long enough in the south to have his manners so far conformed to London fashions. As Dr Lawson and he were walking up the public street, they met the minister of Stitchel and his young wife. Dr Lawson, in his plain way, kindly shook them by the hand; but his London brother at once resorted to the primitive mode of courtesy, and kissed the lady. On observing which, Dr Lawson smiled, and said, 'Oh, Mr Waugh, Mr Waugh, you remind me of the scribes of old, of whom it is written, that they loved salutations in the market-places.' In the laugh which this drew forth, the blushing lady recovered her self-possession.

Dr Waugh has almost immortalized the summer sacraments at Stitchel, especially the tent-gatherings, upon these occasions, on '*Stitchell Brae.*' 'O that I could again sit among them,' he exclaimed, 'and hear good old Mr Coventry give us as much sound divinity in one sermon, as is now found in ten volumes! It was a scene on which God's eye might love to look. Such sermons! and such prayers!—none such to be heard now-a-days. What are your cathedrals, and your choirs, and your organs? God laid the foundations of *our* temple on the pillars of the earth. Our floor was nature's verdant carpet; our canopy was the vaulted sky, the heaven in which the Creator dwells. In the distance, the Cheviot Hills; around us, nature in all her luxuriant loveliness. There, fields ripening into harvest; here, lowing herds in all the fulness of supply for man. On the banks of that little rivulet at our feet, lambs, the emblem of innocence, sporting in the shade, and offering to Heaven the only acknowledgment they could, in the expression of their happiness and joy. The birds around warbling praises to Him who daily provides for all their wants; the flowers and green fields offering their perfume; and, lovelier still, and infinitely dearer to Him, multitudes of redeemed souls and hearts, perfumed by faith, singing His praises in "grave sweet melody," perhaps in the tune of "Martyrs." Martyrs, so sung on Stitchel Brae,

might almost arrest an angel on an errand of mercy, and would afford him more pleasure than all the chanting, and all the music, and all the organs in all the cathedrals of Europe.' It so happened that Dr Lawson was present at the last summer communion in which the 'tent' was used on this now famous *Brae;* and he preached the last sermon that was delivered from it, on a beautiful evening in July 1810. As they talked over the supper-table that night, he mentioned that it was just forty years since, for the first time, he attended a Stitchel sacrament; and then gave some account of 'the work' on that occasion. 'How can that be?' some one asked. You were not then a minister.' 'No,' he replied, 'I was but a student; but I remember all about it.' He was asked to allude to this circumstance in his sermon on the following forenoon. 'I have done as *outré* things before,' was his answer, and the subject dropped. On the Monday he gave out his text from John xxi. 18, 19, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God.' Having read these verses, he thus prefaced his sermon: 'Brethren, the first time I attended a communion in Stitchel was this time forty years. Your late venerable pastor, Mr Coventry, then discoursed from these words in John ii. 11, 'This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him.' He, on that occasion, chose a subject connected with Christ's *first* miracle; and I, on this occasion, select one connected with His last. Few of you now present were, at that time, hearers of the Gospel; and forty years hence, all, or most of us, shall be either in heaven or in hell. O that we were wise! that we understood this! that we would consider our latter end!' He then preached a most interesting sermon, which was

listened to with solemn and profound attention. On inquiring afterwards, it was ascertained that only one of his audience, an elder of Mr Hall's, of Kelso, had been present on the occasion referred to.

The stories about his absence of mind are numerous, and some of them are true. 'Nullum magnum ingenium sine mixtura dimentiæ,' does not in any sense apply to this peculiarity in his habits; for though he was, in a sense, a man of genius, there was such an air of judgment about it, as to throw mere eccentricities into the shade. It has been shrewdly surmised, that he is the *original* of the 'Rev. Josiah Cargill,' whom Sir Walter Scott so inimitably depicts in the novel of 'St Ronan's Well;' and, certainly, the resemblance, in some important points, is very striking. Sir Walter, indeed, could scarce miss having the Selkirk scholar in his eye. He was a near neighbour; and, though not upon terms of intimacy, they were well known to each other. Sir Walter had a most profound respect for Dr Lawson's learning, and especially for the extent and accuracy of his historical knowledge. He is said to have consulted him sometimes on historical facts and dates. In submitting a few illustrations of his 'obliviousness,' or eccentricity of manner, it is proper to guard the reader against the idea that Dr Lawson ever fell into such negligences in *society;* it was only when he was alone, or prosecuting some weighty subject that lay upon his mind when in the repose of study. It must also be remembered that freedoms were allowed in his time, which at present are unknown. Great changes have come over the manners of quiet social life since his days, which in some respects may not be considered to be improvements. In general, he had a correct taste, an innate sense of propriety, and spoke and acted accordingly.

His son, the late Rev. A. Lawson, used to tell that his father's mind 'was often so intensely occupied with important and profound study, that he did sometimes greatly forget himself, so as not only to cause the gentle smile, but

the hearty laugh;' and he gave the following instance. One very rainy day, as his father was trudging along a road, a friend, whose door he was passing, saw the plight in which he was, and shoved an umbrella into his hand. As he went along, the rain still falling, a person met him who noticed that the umbrella was buttoned up in his great-coat. Thinking that the umbrella had given way, he said, 'Doctor, I am sorry that your umbrella has not served you in this heavy rain.' 'O,' replied he, 'I have a good umbrella, but I have concealed it here lest it get wetted by the shower.'

One day, when he had finished his lecture in the Hall, and when leaving the room, instead of taking with him, as usual, his Hebrew Bible, he deliberately lifted one of the student's hats, and walked off with it. On discovering his mistake, he returned, and, laying the hat on the table, simply said, 'I think I have taken away one of your hats instead of my Bible.' None of the students had courage to inform him, at the time, of his mistake. His reverend appearance, and their high respect for him, prevented either speech or laughter.

He did not hesitate when, in the act of preaching, anything of importance occurred to his mind, to pause, make the intimation, and then proceed. Once, when he had finished his first particular, he announced his second, thus: 'I remark, in the second place, that'— Here he paused, and added, 'I intend a diet of pastoral visitation, on Tuesday next, among the families residing,' etc., etc.; and then, quite composedly, proceeded with his subject.

There was a particular peg in the lobby of his house, on which he hung his hat. By some mistake, one of the young ladies' bonnets had got upon this peg; and in passing out, the worthy man took it down, and would have walked with it deliberately up the street, had not some one informed him of the mistake.

The vent of the kitchen chimney was once on fire: the servant-girl took alarm, ran to the library, and, suddenly open-

ing the door, shrieked to the Doctor, 'Sir, the house is on fire!' 'Go and tell your mistress,' he said; 'you know I have no charge of household matters,'—and so continued his reading.

One of his sons, who afterwards became a highly esteemed Christian minister, was a very tricky boy, perhaps mischievous in his tricks. Near the manse lived an old henwife, of crabbed temper, and rather ungodly in her mode of living. She and the boy had quarrelled; and the result was, that he took a quiet opportunity to kill one of her hens. She went immediately to Dr Lawson, and charged his son with the deed. She was believed, and as it was not denied, punishment was inflicted. He was ordered to abide in the house, and, to make the sentence more severe, his father took him into the *study*, and commanded him to sit there with him. The son was restless, and frequently eyed the door. At last, he saw his father drowned in thought, and quietly slipped out. He went directly to the henwife's, and killed another hen, returning immediately, and taking his place in the library, his father having never missed him. The henwife speedily made her appearance, and charged the slaughter again upon him. Dr Lawson, however, waxed angry,—declared her to be a false accuser, as the boy had been closeted with him all the time,—adding, 'Besides, this convinces me that you had just as little ground for your first accusation; I therefore acquit him of both, and he may go out now.' The woman went off in high dudgeon, and the prisoner in high glee.

When he went to assist at the Dunfermline communion, he always called upon the Rev. Mr Carruthers, of South Queensferry, and either passed a night with him, or waited till such time as he could obtain a passage across to Fife.

Mr Carruthers was one of the excellent of the earth, and cherished the highest regard for his visitor, who reciprocated the friendship. At one time, the weather became so tempestuous that the boatmen refused to cross. Dr Lawson was ex-

pected to preach in Dunfermline in the evening, and was somewhat disconcerted. Mr Carruthers and he went down to the pier once and again, and tried to persuade them to attempt the passage. But they would not. Dr Lawson asked them when they thought the wind might fall, and they replied that three or four hours might elapse. He walked aside a few yards, evidently vexed; but returned, saying, 'I insist on your trying to ferry me across. Dr Husband will be very anxious, and I will be most obliged.' '*No*,' said the skipper emphatically, 'it is impossible. In such a storm the boat is sure to be lost.' He again stepped aside by himself, and appeared to be in deep thought, when he was seen taking out his purse, with which in his hand he returned to the man, saying quite sincerely, 'Did you say the boat might be lost?' 'Yes,' replied the boatman. 'Well, then,' said Dr Lawson, fingering the money in the purse, 'how much would the boat cost?' overlooking, in his absence, the certainty of his own and the sailor's loss.

Mrs Lawson and he were once returning from a sacrament in the country. As was the custom then, they rode upon the same horse—she on a pad behind him. At her request he made a *detour*, that she might call on a friend. Having slipped off the horse, Mrs Lawson went and made her call, he promising to wait upon her return. She was not long gone, when the horse quietly walked away, and soon reached Selkirk. 'Here,' called the Doctor to the servant, 'come and help your mistress off.' The servant looked surprised, and told him that Mrs Lawson was not upon the horse. He immediately rode back and took up his wife, who was making the best of her way homewards.

He made some awkward mistakes sometimes when out in the country upon diets of pastoral visitation. He rode off, one forenoon, to visit at Whitmore Hall. In about an hour afterwards he was seen riding up the street to his manse, utterly unconscious that the animal had turned round and

brought him back to Selkirk, without accomplishing his intended visitation.

He was journeying on foot once to assist at the communion in Liddesdale. He went off the road, and got bewildered among the hills. Meeting a herd-boy, he asked him the way to Newcastletown; the herd kindly walked with him a mile or two, and having set him right, returned. This was early in the morning. When the herd was at dinner in the kitchen, a tap was heard at the door. 'Come in,' said the boy. 'Can you tell me the road to Newcastletown, and I will be obliged to you, for I doubt I have wandered?' inquired a stranger. The boy looked up, and saw that it was Dr Lawson. 'Sir,' said he, 'I think ye're baith daft and donnered. I pat you on that road this morning already, and what brings you back this way again?' The doctor recognised his guide, and simply said, 'I daresay I am donnered enough; but I have reason to thank God that I have lost none of my senses yet.' The herd thereafter arose, and kindly reconducted him to the right path.

There was great alarm one night in the manse at Selkirk. The Professor had gone away in the morning to a country visitation, and was not expected back till the afternoon. Afternoon came, but not the doctor. At length a servant lad from a neighbouring farm called, and said he had come to take back the horse with which the minister had been accommodated by his master that afternoon. He was told that Dr Lawson had not returned. Different parties were now sent out to search for him, and darkness was fast setting in. After a considerable time, he returned, under the guidance of a man who had found him in the midst of a corn-field, sitting upon the horse, which, while he was meditating, was busy ruminating the corn on which it fed.

This good man, with all his gravity both of mind and manner, was by no means insensible to the ludicrous, and could take as hearty a laugh as others, when there was a time and an occasion for it. One day he surprised Mrs Lawson

by bursting into an immoderate fit of laughter as he entered the manse. On being questioned as to the cause of it, he said, 'As I was coming down the street, I saw Jock Cuthers getting a special drubbing from the hands of his wife.' Mrs Lawson remarked that she did not see in that any great cause for laughter, but the contrary. 'Ay,' replied the Doctor, 'it may be so; but the thing that makes me laugh so is, not that Jock got licked, but that he was so silly as to allow her. He should be master in his own house.'

Many of Dr Lawson's wise sayings have become proverbial in the country-side where he so long lived. Some of them are worthy of being recorded. It is told that he often threw out remarks in his sermons, evidently unconscious of their being out of the ordinary, and then passed on as if he had uttered the simplest commonplace. 'I remember an instance of this,' said an old man, one of his hearers. 'He was lecturing in the fifth chapter of First Timothy, and after expounding the 23d verse, he said, "Paul did not always work miracles, otherwise he would not have ordered Timothy to drink wine, nor have left Trophimus at Miletum sick."' Alluding to animated preaching, he said, 'He who, as a preacher, is animated from beginning to end of his discourse, is not animated at all.' The late Dr Balmer often, with delight beaming in his countenance, expatiated on the feats of his tutor's memory and scholarship. He used to tell that some of Dr Lawson's greatest sayings were never printed, even when the sermons themselves, in which they occurred, were published. He instanced his 'Sermons to the Aged,' some of which he had heard, but which, in their printed form, did not contain many of the most sagacious reflections that escaped him in their delivery from the pulpit. 'You will not find this one,' said Dr Balmer; 'and I heard it and others of a like kind: "An old man should know that he is old, and should be willing that others should know it too."'

Dr Thomson, of Penrith, was asked by him what he

considered to be the best preparation for good preaching on Sabbath. Dr Thomson suggested the ordinary preliminaries of study and prayer, when Dr Lawson added, 'One of the best preparations for preaching well is a sound sleep.' At another time, in answering affirmatively the question, whether he (Dr T.) had slept well, he rejoined, 'The man who sleeps well must either have a very good conscience or a very stupid one.'

Dr Kidston, of Glasgow, was from a boy a great favourite with him, and was privileged with his friendship till death. Had I foreknown that the honour of writing this memoir should have fallen to me, I would have carefully taken down from his lips by far the most authentic, characteristic, and copious anecdotes and proverbial sayings of this excellent man. The most and best of these, however, are now buried with him, and cannot be revived. Dr Kidston had rather a taste for curious inquiries both in metaphysics and theology. In the long course of his sixty years' ministry these accumulated, and it was his wont, when with congenial friends, to present the knotty points to them, and obtain their views. Dr Lawson was too adroit at cutting such Gordian knots to be allowed to pass, and many a subtle question did he solve for his inquisitive friend. On one occasion he submitted the following query to the Professor:—

'The great commandment is, that we are to love our neighbour as ourselves. Now, Doctor, does this mean that we are really to love all our fellow-creatures as fondly as we do ourselves?'

'That cannot be,' replied Dr Lawson, 'the import of our Lord's words; for then a man would have to love the wives of other men as dearly as his own wife.'

This reply is certainly subtle, discovering a comprehensive and acute mind,—a mind that can perceive, at a glance, recondite and refined analogies; that can marry thoughts to one another which were before apart.

When Dr Lawson travelled to London, he had in the coach

with him two men, who evidently suspected that they had got a minister and a simpleton with them. They acted accordingly; but he seemed not to heed it. At last one of them put to him rather abruptly the startling question, 'How is it, sir, that a man such as I take you to be, can refuse to believe that Socrates and Plato, Epictetus and Seneca, and other such wise and virtuous men among the heathen, have a place among the blessed in heaven?'

'God,' replied the wise and good man, 'has told us in His Word, that "where no provision is, the people perish," and that "there is no other name given under heaven among men whereby they must be saved, but the name of Jesus;" but whether it pleased Him in any other way to make known this name to such celebrated heathens as those you have mentioned, I do not find that He has anywhere expressly informed me. I feel that I ought not to attempt "to be wise above what is written," and that it is not for me to "limit the Holy One of Israel." If it please God, in His mercy, and through faith in His Son, to take you and me to heaven, and that we shall find there Socrates and Plato, I am sure we will be glad indeed to meet them; but if we shall not find them in heaven, I am also sure that the Judge of all the earth will be able to assign a good reason for their absence, and that none in heaven will be either able or willing to dispute either the justice or the wisdom of His sovereign arrangements.'

During this conversation Dr Lawson had clasped his hands together, and had continued to twirl the one thumb round the other. Piqued at the 'clencher' he had received to his question, his fellow-traveller asked him, 'Pray, sir, do you always do that?' imitating, at the same time, the Doctor's motion with his thumbs. 'No,' was the philosophic reply, 'I sometimes do *this*,' and he twirled his thumbs in the reverse way. The two wiseacres thought it best to let him alone, and so they had quietness during the remainder of the journey.

Travelling at another time with a young friend, the latter said to him, 'I do not think you would need to fear much though your thoughts were laid open.' 'I could not bear,' he replied, 'that the course of my thoughts, even for one hour, should be exposed.'

Talking one day of the circumstances of one's birth, he said, 'It is a matter over which we have no control; but it is certainly a matter of great thankfulness that we were not born the sons of princes or of dukes, but in humble life. In this condition there are fewer obstacles in the way of becoming truly religious. In high life there is much that is artificial, and so much devotedness to the things of time, and so much pleasure-seeking, that the difficulty in the way of becoming truly godly is vastly increased.'

No feature in Dr Lawson's character was more conspicuous or beautiful than his love of truth. That love was supreme from his very boyhood. He was once charged with having written and published falsehood. He was astonished. He seemed almost confused, and scarce could realize it. At length, with the greatest simplicity and sincerity, he said, 'I am indeed chargeable, in other respects, with many and great sins against God; but, from the earliest of my recollections, I am unable to remember any one instance in which I have asserted as true what I knew or believed to be false.' On one occasion he was invited by Lord and Lady Traquair to dinner. The family of Traquair is a Roman Catholic one, and surprise may be felt that such a man as Dr Lawson should have been thus countenanced. By this time his fame was widely spread over all that district as one of the wisest and most learned of men, and the curiosity of that noble house was excited about him. He went, and on his return Mrs Lawson made special inquiries about the whole matter, especially respecting the kind of entertainment, and how the man of such primitive manners conducted himself at the table of a noble lord. Among the viands of the repast was a

savoury dish of mushrooms, of which the venerable guest was asked to partake. He did so, but he merely tasted them.

'How do you relish my mushrooms?' inquired Lady Traquair.

'I do not like them at all, my Lady,' was his reply.

'How could you so speak of her Ladyship's mushrooms?' asked Mrs Lawson, when he was narrating the scene; 'it was not good breeding.'

'It may be so,' he said, 'but I could not tell a lie, whatever came of the mushrooms.'

Dr Simpson thus writes to the compiler: 'Many a time have we heard the story of Lady Traquair's mushrooms, and it was always told as illustrative of his unswerving truthfulness. How many, in such a predicament, through an assumed politeness and dread of giving offence, would have asserted the very contrary! But he never allowed an untruth, in any circumstances, to pollute his lips. Neither, indeed, would he suffer any profanity to pollute his ears without bearing testimony against it. This was finely illustrated on many occasions. The following instances are authentic:—He was dining one day at a friend's house. A gentleman of the party was frequently employing, in his conversation, the words, 'The devil take me.' Dr Lawson at length arose, and ordered his horse. The host was surprised, and insisted upon his remaining, as dinner had scarcely begun. But nothing could prevail on him to do so; and when pressed to give a reason for his abrupt departure, he replied, 'That gentleman there (pointing to him) has been praying pretty often this afternoon, that the devil would take him; and as I have no wish to be present at the scene, I beg to be allowed to depart.' On another occasion, he had come into Edinburgh to have a consultation with the late Dr Gregory upon the state of his health. He was introduced by one of his own clerical friends, who was on terms of intimacy with this eminent physician. In the course of the visit Dr Gregory frequently used the name of

God. Dr Lawson, on leaving, said to him, 'Sir, it is written, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.' The Doctor instantly turned round to their mutual friend, and said curtly, 'Dr ——, you did not tell me that Mr Lawson was a clergyman.'

His usual medical adviser (at one time) had contracted this sinful and vulgar habit of profane swearing; and, though in general careful to set a seal upon his lips in the minister's presence, he sometimes forgot himself. The Doctor had sent for him on one occasion to consult upon the state of his health, and gave a pretty minute account of his ailments. Off his guard, the physician rather angrily said, 'D—— it, sir, you are the slave of a vile habit, and you will not soon recover unless you at once give it up.'

'And what is the vile habit you refer to?' simply inquired the patient.

'It is your practice of smoking—the use of tobacco is injuring your constitution.'

'Well, if that be the case,' said Dr Lawson, 'I can abandon the pipe; but will you permit me to give you a hint too, as to a vile habit of your own; and which, were you to give it up, would be a great benefit to yourself, and a comfort to your friends?'

'What is that?' inquired the M.D.

'I refer to your habit of profane swearing,' replied the divine.

'True,' said Dr ——, 'but that is not an expensive habit, like yours.'

'Ah, sir!' rejoined Lawson, 'I warn you that you will discover it to be a very expensive habit indeed, when the account is handed to you.'

His preaching was often tender and pathetic, at other times conscience-striking, leaving, like the eloquence of Pericles, a sting in the minds and memories of his hearers.

His exercitations on the decalogue were particularly pungent. It is said that, when he came to the eighth commandment, he insisted strongly on *restitution.* Next morning, a family, from whose house a pair of shoes had been stolen some years before, found the price of them lying upon the sole of the window, placed there by the unknown offender. The bow had been drawn at a venture, but God gave to it the right direction.

In a very simple, and apparently easy way, as has been already illustrated, Dr Lawson could be cuttingly severe. To a minister of rather a light mind, bordering on impudence, if it did not embrace it, he once said—

'Sir, your predecessor was a grave, good, godly man.'

'You do not mean,' replied the other, 'to insinuate that I am not.'

'I only say, *emphatically,*' was the reply, 'that your predecessor was an eminently godly man.' The reply operated as a 'sharp two-edged sword.'

The late Rev. Mr Smart, of Paisley, with some others of his quondam fellow-students, being on a summer excursion, called *en passant* on their old Professor. After some desultory conversation they happened to take up the subject of '*the influence of terror.*' In illustration, Mr Smart narrated that a man once attempted to rob an eagle's nest on the face of a tremendous precipice, being let down by means of a rope. While engaged with the eaglets, down with fearful swoop came upon him one of the old couple. He had carried a sword with him, and he instantly struck at it. In doing so, he accidentally cut the rope by which he was suspended, all except one ply. Upon this, he shouted in terror to his companions aloft, and implored them to be cautious in hoisting him up. He was got up in safety; 'but,' added Mr Smart, 'such had been the influence of fear in his mind, upon perceiving his most hazardous condition, that his hair, which was jet black when he was let down, was found to be white as snow when he was pulled up.'

'Ay, ay,' said Dr Lawson, wishing to check the marvellous, 'I recollect to have heard of a man whose wig had turned grey from a fright he got.'

He once somehow got benighted when travelling from Selkirk to assist his friend Mr Kidston, of Stow. On passing a farm-house, he inquired the road to Stow. The farmer's wife did not know him, but asked him to come in and rest a while. He did so, when she told him that he was off the direct road, and that it would be better for him to wait over the night, and proceed in the morning. He consented. Supper, in the shape of good oat-meal porridge, was presented, of which he slightly partook. When done, he noticed the wife giving a sort of inquiring nod to her husband, to which he returned another sufficiently intelligible to his spouse. The 'big ha' Bible' was then laid upon the table, and family worship was performed, the worthy woman presiding in the service, and also offering up the prayer.[1] The minister left next morning, and arrived at Stow in peace and safety. The farmer and his wife were members of the Stow congregation, and great was their surprise when they saw their guest of the former evening entering the pulpit. The wife waited upon him at the dismissal, and apologized for presenting him with 'porridge' for his supper; adding that, if she had but known who he was, something better might have been forthcoming. 'Never mind, my good woman,' replied Mr Lawson, 'I was much obliged to you for your hospitality; but you must allow me to say that I liked your prayer a great deal better than your porridge.'

[1] Dr Waugh, of London, used to tell that 'when his father happened to be from home, the family devotions were conducted by his mother, as at that time indeed was the practice generally observed by religious mistresses of families' (*vide* 'Memoir of Dr Waugh,' p. 14). In some instances, however, it seems the mistresses led the devotions even when the master was present. There were not only giants in those days, but wives worthy of them.

He was once present at the ordination of a minister somewhere in Fifeshire. During the solemn service a violent thunderstorm broke upon the place, and cast a gloom over the minds of the people, especially of those who had not been favourable to the settlement. He heard some superstitious remarks upon the subject, and put an end to them by saying, 'You will observe that the Prince of the power of the air has done his utmost, and yet the ordination has gone on, and no evil of any kind has been done.' On his return, he had to cross the Frith of Forth, but waited in a certain brother's house till a threatening storm had passed over. It was suspected by him that this brother was not given to hospitality. Every now and then he would rise and look out at the window, saying, as he resumed his seat, 'Be not uneasy, Doctor, it will break up yet, and you will get across by and by;' to which he replied, 'Do not fear, sir, for if I cannot get across I will not stay with you.'

When the French prisoners were at Selkirk, they got up for their amusement an amateur theatre, and enacted French plays. Knowing that he was quite familiar with the language, they sent him a request, as a compliment, to attend the performance. He asked, 'Is it customary in France for ministers to go to the theatre?' 'There are some who do, and some who do not,' was the reply. 'Well,' said he, 'it is the same in this country, and I am one of those who do not.'

The late excellent Mr Elles, of Saltcoats, when on his marriage tour, called and spent an afternoon, along with his bride, at the Professor's. The hours wore away, Mr and Mrs Elles being loth to leave. The good man insisted on them remaining over the night. But they could not, having promised to go to Stitchel, where Mrs Elles' father (the Rev. Mr M'Lay) was minister 'We will have good moon-light all the way,' said Mr Elles, on parting with him. 'Yes,' replied the Doctor, 'and I hope we are all going to that city

"which hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."'

When delivering his lectures and sermons, he was sometimes so deeply impressed as to be unable to proceed. This was affectingly the case one day, when he was delivering his exposition on Joseph's discovery of himself to his brethren. He wept, and the congregation wept. 'I think,' he said, 'we will all better take a rest for a time.' He then sat down till composure returned, when he resumed.

These and many other characteristic sayings and doings of Dr Lawson have been long afloat in the circle of his friends and admirers. They are here recorded, as well to satisfy a general expectation, as to illustrate pleasing features in his character. Jeremy Taylor has been called 'the Shakespeare of the Church.' We may pronounce Lawson to have been her 'Solomon.' We conclude the chapter by a mere reference to the kindliness of his heart and manners towards the community among whom he resided. He inquired not whether they were Seceders or Churchmen, rich or poor, blind or lame. If he could do a good turn to any one, he did it. Passing by others of a more showy description, we may simply advert to his passionate sympathies for the poor in their diseases and destitution; and when he could not by his own efforts assist them, he was ever ready to interest others in their behalf.

He wrote the following letter to Dr Caverhill, a distinguished physician:—

'Dear Doctor,—The bearer of this is the wife of one of my elders. She is very much troubled with a scorbutic disorder, as is also her daughter. They are poor, and cannot pay the medical fee. Will you be so good as give them your best advice, and place it to the account of the Friend of man and Saviour of the world?'

We subjoin also, two extracts, as illustrations, from letters which he wrote to Dr Kidston:—

'SELKIRK, *Nov.* 22, 1800.

'DEAR WILLIAM,—I am sorry to put you to the expense of a postage, even from Edinburgh, on a subject in which you have so little interest, as that of which I am going to speak. An old man, called John Welsh, who keeps the toll near Sunderland, a very respectable member of my congregation has a son lying sick at a place called Partick, near Glasgow, where he has been since Whitsunday. He has a wife and six children, and his father's bowels of compassion are greatly moved for him, though he can afford him little relief. He begged me to write to you concerning him, although he did not know whether Partick was in your bounds or not. I told him that I would write to you to speak to the brother in whose bounds he was, that he might take the care of him that is usual in such cases. I made this promise to soothe the good man's grief, although I am persuaded his neighbours would not suffer him to starve. The young man has been a hearer, but not a communicant, with us, and I cannot attest his character. I believe I have not seen him for more than twenty years. I hope you will take the first opportunity of mentioning the man's situation to the brother in whose bounds Partick is, if it is not in your own. I could not refuse to the good man's grief the promise that I now perform; and you know a promise made, however inconsiderable in value, must be performed.

'Your father, at the time of the communion, was well, and as well qualified as ever for his work. You have probably heard that Mr Bell, of Wooler, is taken from us. He has, I believe, left few equals and no superiors amongst us, in those qualities that commend esteem or engage love. I am persuaded that he is now with Christ.'

'This will be delivered into your hands by William Emond, a young man who has the misfortune of being blind, but is respectable from his behaviour. He has been long a communicant with us, and leaves us with a fair, and, I believe, a well-deserved character. I was once highly pleased in visiting his mother's family, in hearing her say that he had been a father to it and to her in her widowed condition. He is now disabled by a new affliction from providing for his mother and himself, and goes to Glasgow in the hope of purchasing, at an easy rate, a hand organ, by means of which he expects to be able to supply her necessities as well as he formerly did by the fiddle. I know not whether you can be of any use to him by advice on this subject; but if you can, I know you will be happy to serve a man at once deserving and unfortunate. My best wishes to Mrs Kidston, and for your young family. I hope she has learned to bear affliction, to profit by it, and to be thankful that our afflictions are mingled with so many mercies.'

Dr Lawson was often doing such beautiful things as these, and these are the things that make manifest where a noble heart is beating. His meek but kind intercessions on behalf of the toll keeper's son and the blind fiddler, will not detract from the pathos and richness of his benevolent nature. Besides the young friend to whom he wrote, he could not have found one in these respects so like himself. It is not now in my power, but, had it been, I could have ascertained from Dr Kidston how he managed in the cases entrusted to him by his beloved tutor.

Dr Lawson's usefulness as a minister was often manifested and felt in the kindly and judicious manner in which he tendered advice when he saw it to be necessary. Perhaps, in this respect, he was the most inoffensive counsellor that ever ventured upon the delicate task. It is often said, that there is nothing so difficult as the art of making advice agreeable. He had this art; not that he was a meddler in other folks'

affairs, especially where there was strife: this he carefully eschewed, and all conceited interference he studiously avoided. It is said that John Wilkes, in order to keep away unpalatable advisers whom he did not like, had the words, 'audi alteram partem,' inscribed above his chair; but in Dr Lawson's case this device was not necessary. His very presence was enough to forbid the approach of censoriousness. His own gentle method comes out beautifully in the following letters. A lady of his acquaintance had married a French officer who was a Roman Catholic, and to her he addressed the following faithful and delicate lines:—

'I wished to call upon you before you left Selkirk for a foreign country. Indisposition was one of the causes that hindered me: now, I believe, it is too late. I therefore bid you farewell by a few lines.

'You know the reason for which I was dissatisfied with your marriage; but I heartily approve of your following the husband you have chosen, were he to go to the end of the world. The difference of your religion from his is so far from being a reason why you should not fulfil every duty as a wife, that it furnishes a strong argument for endeavouring to fulfil them in perfection, that you may adorn your profession.

'Your husband, I hope, is too generous and too reasonable to wish you to change your religion, unless you are convinced of its being false. He would certainly rather wish you to be honest in the profession of a religion which he may esteem erroneous, than a hypocrite in the profession of a religion which he esteems to be true.

'You will, however, meet with temptations to the change of that good religion which you learned from your worthy father; but I hope you will attend to the Bible, and pray duly for the enlightening and establishing grace of the Holy Spirit, that you may be kept from falling. You know the sentence pronounced against all who are ashamed of Christ and of His words, and against all who love any earthly friends,

or even their own life, more than Christ (Mark viii. 38; Luke xiv. 25–27).

'I pray that you may always enjoy the pleasures of a good conscience, that, whether present or absent, you may be accepted of God, and that he may make you the delight of your husband and friends while you are in the world.'

To a nephew, who had engaged in a seafaring life, he wrote as follows. The whole letter discovers a great knowledge of human nature and character; and it is employed to give effect to the most wholesome admonitions. Extracts only from this letter are given:—

'I hear that you have made choice of a seafaring life. I hope you will find that our God is the God of the sea as well as of the dry land. Those who go down to the sea, and do business in the great waters, see His works and His wonders in the deep, and often find reason to thank Him for signal deliverances from perils of great waters. It was surprising that Jonah should ever think of fleeing away in a ship from the presence of the Lord; but his eyes were soon opened, and he received a chastisement which brought him down to the belly of hell, and got an unexpected deliverance which made him an eminent type of our great Redeemer.

'Your life may sometimes be exposed to alarming danger; but the knowledge that this may often be the case will, I hope, be useful to you. Boast not of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. This may be said of us who remain on the dry land as well as you: yet seamen are still more inexcusable than other men, if they do not remember a lesson so loudly proclaimed by the raging waves and the roaring wind; and I do not see how they can enjoy peace in their minds, unless they endeavour so to behave in the course of their lives as they would have wished to have done, when they see themselves carried up by one wave to the clouds of heaven, and ready to be plunged into the bosom of the ocean by the next.

'I hope the grace of God will preserve you from imitating any of the bad examples that may be set before you by your companions. It has been the unhappiness of many of them, that they have not received an education fitted to preserve them from yielding to the temptations to which they may be exposed; but you have been taught the fear of the Lord, and in you it will be more criminal to practise wicked deeds with them that work iniquity.'

Dr Lawson had a dear friend in the late Rev. Mr Young, of Kincardine. In old age his mind became clouded. He resigned his charge, retired with his family to Edinburgh, and soon thereafter entered into peace. When his friend at Selkirk heard of the disturbed state of his mind, he sent him a very tender and soothing epistle. The vigorous, the tranquil, and the gay, are apt to treat such a state of mind somewhat roughly, and even to ridicule its aberrations and tremors. Dr Lawson knew better, and therefore simply expostulates with Mr Young in gentle terms, tries to uplift his spirit by wise counsels, and then leaves him to that mercy which will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax. The extracts subjoined are good specimens of his style:—

'As I have seldom had the opportunity of seeing you for many years back, I take this opportunity of putting you in mind that, by the long-suffering of God, I still continue in the world, and may derive much benefit from your prayers. I am not what I once was; yet through God's mercy I possess many comforts, and that cheerfulness of spirit which becomes creatures to whom He is indulgent.

'It gives me pain to hear that a man of your good sense, and one with whom the credit of religion is materially concerned, from the good opinion entertained of you as a Christian and a minister, should groan under disquieting thoughts concerning your future allotment from the hand of God. Do you not remember the pleasant doctrine that you

have taught from your youth up? You surely would not for the whole world have it thought that you call in question the exceeding riches of the grace of God, who sent His Son to die that we might live. I hope you will follow the example of David, who did what he could to dispel all gloomy thoughts from the mind, by turning his thoughts to the excellency of the mercy of God, the wonderful works which He did in the days of old, and the sure word of God. Your Bible is much larger than his, and brighter and sweeter is the light which flows from Him who came to heal the broken-hearted.

'I would be much dejected were my thoughts always to dwell on myself; but, through the righteousness of Christ, grace reigns to eternal life, and in Him it finds all that justice can demand from the believing sinner. I will, therefore, hope in Christ; and, as a penitent malefactor once said, No man ever perisheth with his face turned to the cross of Jesus. The God of all comfort will, I hope, in due time drive away every gloomy thought from your mind. For your friends' sake, for your own sake, for Christ's sake, look in humble hope to the Saviour; and may you be enabled to glorify God by a cheerful reliance on His rich mercy in Christ Jesus!'

His tender concern for the spiritual welfare of the unconverted comes beautifully out in the following remonstrance with a thoughtless young man, who continued to resist the Gospel of the grace of God:—

'SELKIRK, *July* 1817.

'SIR,—I believe you will wonder, if you have looked at the subscription of this letter, why I have thought of writing to you, as I believe I have had no communication with you save that of asking you a few questions in your childhood. But you know I administered to you the ordinance of baptism in your infancy; and I hope I may be excused for putting you in mind of a transaction in which you are so deeply interested.

Sorry am I that you have not more deeply felt the obligations laid on you by that seal of God's covenant; but I am not without hope, that the instructions of your pious father will sometimes be occurring to your mind.

'He did not neglect his engagements to train you up in the service of that God and Saviour in whose name you were baptized. I am persuaded that he will appear on the right hand of the Judge of the world, on the day of His appearing. And surely it must be an awful thing for you (which God forbid), if he should be a witness that you were early recognised as a member of the Church of Christ, and earnestly exhorted to walk in His ways, and yet chose rather to continue to the end of life walking in those ways in which no man ever yet found rest or peace.

'For your father's sake, I greatly rejoiced to hear that some further space of repentance has been allowed you.

'I have sometimes thought, what if this favour of Providence should be an answer to the prayers of your father for your eternal welfare: God delights in mercy. At the voice of prayer, He respited for a year longer the barren fig-tree. If it brought forth fruit, it was well; but if not, it was to be cut down as a cumberer of the ground.

'I would not have troubled you or myself with this letter, did I not humbly hope that God would yet have mercy upon the son of my departed friend, that he perish not: there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.

'I believe your father is now enjoying the pleasures of an angel in heaven; and that neither the conduct nor the misfortunes of any of his children can in the smallest degree diminish his happiness. Yet I am persuaded that it will be a great accession to his felicity, to be informed that Divine grace has disposed you to comply with the gracious declarations so often given to backsliders, and so sweetly enforced by merciful promises: Jeremiah, third chapter throughout. I hope you will not count me impertinent in giving these lines

of advice to one in your circumstances, who is the son of one whom I so highly respected as your father. I will greatly rejoice in the day of Christ, if I find that your afflictions and dangers have been the means of bringing you back to the God of your father.

'I will not trouble you with anything more, but may just mention one or two passages of Scripture, which represent to you the danger of obstinacy in sin after warnings, and the great encouragements which the God of grace gives you to return to Himself: Proverbs xxii. to xxiii., xxix. 1; Luke xv. throughout; Isaiah xl. 6, 7.

'I suppose your father called your name Ebenezer, because the Lord had blessed him.

'He will be your helper also, after all that you have done, if you hearken to His merciful call, Jonah ii. 4.—I am, yours, etc. 'G. LAWSON.'

Dr Lawson, like Jacob, was 'a plain man;' plain in his appearance, in his dress, in his mode of living, and in his inner and outer ways. He affected no style whatever; he lived above it, because he was really above it. If all mere finery be, as it is said to be, a sign of littleness, then was he a great man. What smacked of the thing called 'gentility' was to him more than a stranger; it was a mystery. He turned from it, under a natural repugnance to whatsoever was specious or untruthful. He was not, however, disdainful of those who were its victims, when they chanced to fall in his way. He was not haughty towards them; he pitied them, especially if they were the professing people of God. But though exceedingly unpretending in his habits and manners, those who came into contact with him soon found that he was no simpleton. In his personal appearance he was imposing rather than commanding. His unfeigned meekness made the latter impossible; but his venerable look, and his figure of fully six feet in height, marked him out as a man who had

something to say, and who could say it when necessary. Some consider more the person that speaks than the things he says, and Dr Lawson's hearers were sometimes in danger of falling into this mistake. He soon rectified it, and made them feel that his speech was far more weighty than his personal claims. He was of thin and spare habit; his complexion was sallow; his eyes were rather small, and of greyish colour, but full of meaning and kindness. In repose, his face was quietly thoughtful; but when conversing or preaching, it was radiant, if not sparkling, with intelligence. His usual demeanour was that of a man who was conversing with what was within, rather than observant of what was without. In the pulpit he was grave, solemn, earnest, and preached as Apelles painted, 'for eternity.' At the dying pillow or in the house of mourning, he was felt to be 'a teacher sent from God.' At the fireside, when with his family or his friends, he was genial in spirit and redolent of anecdote, equally far from the placidities and platitudes of the mere talker, and the sonorous drawling of the conceited fop. 'He never indulged,' says one that knew him well, 'in what are called the pleasures of the table.' From taste, as well as from principle, he was sober and abstemious almost to a fault, for he knew and felt that the powers of digestion are weakened by retirement and study; and that, in order to enjoy the pleasures of the man, the scholar, and the Christian, the indulgence of the bodily appetites must in all respects be regulated by the strictest temperance. This, in his case, was the more necessary, as his constitution was somewhat delicate. He was never a robust man, having never fully recovered from the effects of small-pox in his younger days. Early, severe, and unremitting habits shook still more the frail tabernacle, and rendered that abstemiousness, which, in more robust men, would have been a fault, in him a real and necessary virtue. The temperament of genius such as his, whatever be the cause, is generally delicate. In order to its lofty inspirations and

copious overflow, it will ever be found that appetites of all kinds must be kept habitually under the dutiful and happy restraints of Christian sobriety and resignation. At one period of his life he was threatened with the entire loss of his eyesight. For a year or two he could but rarely permit himself to read either the works of others, or what he himself had written or published. By partially covering the page with dark blotting-paper, he managed to write pretty correctly. The glare of the paper, however, gave him so much pain, as to make it impossible for him to peruse it. In these circumstances, Mrs Lawson was in the habit of slowly reading over to him his discourses on the Sabbath morning, as well as the chapters to be read at public worship, with the subjects of lecture, the texts, the Scriptural quotations, and the psalms to be sung. One such reading was quite sufficient to imprint them all on his memory, so that, in the pulpit, he rarely opened the Bible, repeating all the passages announced *memoriter*. This system continued for a year, when his power of vision returned as perfectly as before.

When Dr Lawson was seen by discerning and intelligent men, and especially when they enjoyed his literary fellowship, he was at once appreciated.

On one occasion he assisted the Rev. Mr Glass, of Aberdeen, at a communion. Several of the Professors of the University were invited to meet him. Dr Kidd, the Professor of Oriental Languages, was particularly struck with his profound and extensive learning; but not less so with his singularly unaffected simplicity, if not severity of manners. In a letter to Mr Glass, Dr Kidd gives this most graphic account of his impressions of Dr Lawson: 'I had the honour to be introduced to the Rev. Professor Lawson on Wednesday evening. I consider this as one of the most agreeable and fortunate events in my life. After being in his company about half an hour, the opinion I formed of him was, that he is one of the old prophets, or most certainly another John

the Baptist, sent to announce the appearance and the glory of the latter days. I trust your congregation will derive much comfort and advantage from his mission. When he leaves this place, he should preach all the way on his return home. If he had raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins, I am sure he is so much denied to the luxuries and delicacies of modern fashion, that he would be content to eat locusts and wild honey. I never regretted anything more than the refusal of your invitation for Wednesday, not for the sake of anything else but his company and conversation. Would to God that I were as much denied to the world as he is! I would this day prefer the station and temper of George Lawson to the station and temper of George Rex.' According to Dr Johnson, no one could be in the company of Edmund Burke for half an hour without being conscious that he was a great and an extraordinary man. So thought the acute and accomplished Aberdeen Orientalist of the Selkirk sage. Dr Kidd's remark as to the simplicity and naturalness of his appetites, may seem to be rather overstated, but it is really not so. His life certainly did not consist in meat and drink. A rather amusing, but quite genuine anecdote, illustrative of this, has been furnished to us by a near relative of the late Mr Greig, of Lochgelly, which carries out and confirms Dr Kidd's idea. He arrived one day at the Lochgelly manse quite unexpectedly. It so happened that Mr and Mrs Greig were entertaining at dinner a number of their friends. The dishes were numerous, and the viands various and sumptuous. Mrs Greig was quite delighted that the Professor had come at such a time, and, though every chair was pre-engaged, room was found for him. He himself, however, was somewhat disconcerted. He did not refuse to enter into company; but he rather avoided what are called 'occasions.' If they did not disturb his mind, they sometimes deranged his stomach. Mrs Greig was specially attentive to him after all were seated at the table.

She asked him to partake of some particular dish, but he declined it. She then proposed another, which was also refused; then a third, a fourth—till, indeed, she had completed the entire circle of 'good things,' but to no effect. The worthy man was disinclined to indulge himself, anxious though he saw the lady to be. She was rather hurt at this depreciation of her culinary art; and her mortification was great, as was the surprise of the assembled guests, when the Professor, observing one of the waiting servants behind him, simply said, 'Girl, I will be obliged to you if you will boil and bring me an egg.' This was quite of a piece with his remark to a friend, with whom he was conversing on the variety that obtains in the external circumstances of mankind: 'If I were a king,' he said, 'I do not know that I should live very much differently from what I do—only, perhaps, I would have a haggis oftener to dinner.'

He did not mingle much with what is called 'society.' A partial deafness contributed to this. Besides, he had a great dislike to mere formal visiting, reckoning it, with Cowper, to be 'an insatiable devourer of time, and fit only for those who, if they did not visit, would do nothing.' No wise literary man ever exposed his life less to a 'quotidian ague of such frigid impertinences' as senseless visits. Still he liked good company, when he could get and give what was good for the head and heart. He was a 'discerner of spirits,' and, without seeming to know it, at once took the accurate measure of those with whom he conversed. Often did his simple look and grave appearance lead others astray, and tempted them to use a liberty which was repelled in such a manner as to forbid its repetition, without making enemies to himself; not that he was a Rupert either in debate or in retort, but that he knew how to answer a fool according to his folly. He was never *awkward* when abroad, and, from pure natural instinct, conducted himself with equal self-possession in the presence of a prince and a peasant. We may say of Law-

son's godliness what Hume tells of Sir William Temple's philosophy, 'it taught him to despise the world without rendering him unfit for it.' . . . To those that knew him only superficially, he might seem but little acquainted with men or their ways; but those who knew him intimately, found that he had studied *men* as well as he had studied *books*. In order to get acquainted with the springs of human conduct, it is not necessary to mingle in the giddy circles of fashion and dissipation. 'As face answers to face in a glass, so does the heart of every human being to the hearts of all mankind.' Dr Lawson knew himself, and had, with charitable but penetrating eye, observed those among whom he had been called to perform his part in the drama of human life. No one had read more fully, or studied more sagaciously, the natural and civil, the political and religious, the individual and social history of the human race. When to all these advantages is added the important consideration, that of human character the sign is natural, and the interpretation instructive, we cannot fail to perceive good reason for expecting in Dr Lawson—what was readily found, though not perhaps very generally understood—a profound, and, as it were, intuitive discernment of human character in general, and of the prevailing dispositions, in particular, of the individuals with whom he happened at any time to be brought into contact. This perhaps comparatively little understood feature in his character, united with his universally known rectitude of principle, Christian simplicity of intention, and almost unparalleled humility and charity, benevolence and gentleness of disposition, formed the great and commanding spring by which, without the formal and provoking use of stern authority, he, with such little apparent effort, succeeded so well in swaying all in his family, in his congregation, and among his students, with practical results so honourable to himself, and so happy for all concerned. This great and good man was justly esteemed and loved, in a degree almost inconceivable by thos

who have not been under his care. As no one who knew him ever despised his youth, so no one ever felt disposed to look down on him when bending under the weight of years and bodily infirmities. On the contrary, in the spirit not of Spartan merely, but of Christian reverence for age, not only his family and his brethren in the ministry, but also his congregation and his theological pupils, felt, and showed that they felt, as though the load under which they saw him pressed had been laid on their own shoulders.

But one of the most fascinating as well as most authoritative and powerful of his ways among men, was his sweet and forgiving spirit. Truly his way in this was pleasantness; here his path was peace. He seldom, if ever, gave offence to others; when he did so, he rose to an acknowledgment of his regret. Nothing was so easy to his nature as to forgive, and, with all his great memory, to forget too, any slight or injury from others. Instances, illustrative of this feature, might be given, but there is no need for it; his whole life of meekness and gentleness is the proof. He drew near to that God who 'delights in mercy,' and who 'casts all our sins into the depths of the sea.' Hence his shrinking from sullen, brooding, vindictive men. He greatly pitied, but avoided them. His discerning spirit at once took their accurate measure. He tolerated no such spirit beneath his own roof; and when it appeared in his congregation he faithfully denounced it. He thus continually breathed in a calm and happy atmosphere of love; drew around him kindred spirits, with whom, to the close of life, he practised the gentleness and kindness of Christ. No man better understood that chapter of his religion which puts the crown upon the head of charity. Some may think that, with such a meek spirit, he must have been somewhat lax in his discipline. But it was not so. However disagreeable, he was faithful and conscientious in rebuking sin. At the same time, he often manifested great tenderness of heart towards the fallen, and great

prudence in the management of the 'fama clamosa.' In his days it was customary to administer 'rebuke' from the pulpit, just before pronouncing the blessing,—the person offending being at the far end of the church, confronting the minister. It so happened that, on a certain Sabbath, a female member was to be 'rebuked;' but Dr Lawson forgot all about it, and pronounced the blessing. One of the elders hastily reminded him of the omission. He was for an instant disconcerted; but, casting a pitiful glance at the young woman, and leaning over the pulpit, he simply said, 'Go and sin no more,' and then left the church. On another occasion, one of his people came to inform him that two of the members had committed a most scandalous offence, but that he alone had been witness to it. Dr Lawson was deeply grieved, and asked, 'Have you told this to any one except to me?' The man replied that he had not, and that no one but himself knew about it. 'Well, then,' replied the minister, 'tell it not. Keep it within your own bosom. If God, in His providence, means to permit a scandal to come upon His Church here, let Him do so; but neither you nor I must do so. "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph."'

In conducting the public worship of the sanctuary, he followed the usual method. In prayer he was short, scriptural, and profoundly solemnizing. In the exposition of Scripture he was textual, natural, and occasionally critical. It was always evident that he knew a great deal more than could be communicated, and, equally so, that he was the only person unaware of the masses of wisdom and thought that fell so easily from his lips. In his sermons he was methodical. Though not so much given to 'subdivide' as was then the custom, he invariably seized and represented the mind of God in the passage, elucidated in the purest and simplest language the doctrines contained in it, and enforced, in telling,

sagacious applications, its great practical lessons. He never speculated; occasionally he unfolded the mysteries of the Gospel, but never attempted to explain them. Few men were wise so nearly *up* to what was written; none ever so sensitively shrinked from attempting to withdraw the curtain that hid the Holy of Holies from the view. No son of Levi ever prostrated himself more reverentially before the oracles of Heaven. There his faith was entirely passive. He was as a child in God's temple of truth, and only assumed the proportions, and put forth the strength of a giant's spirit, when he spake that truth as God spake it, and as God would have men to believe it. 'Jesus Christ and Him crucified' was the great staple of his preaching. It comes behind the real state of the matter to say that he was 'not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.' He GLORIED IN IT; in it all—from its beginning in the 'councils of peace,' to its grand consummation on the Cross of Calvary; from its manger in Bethlehem, to its mediatorial throne in heaven. His pulpit was the shrine of the 'wisdom of God.' It uttered no uncertain sound on any portion of the heavenly message. If it became a Sinai to promulgate and enforce the law, it speedily ascended the Gospel Zion to 'lift up' the Son of Man to the admiration and welcome of sinners. We have seen a pulpit in Brussels made of stone, upon which there is a curiously carved representation of the expulsion of our first parents from Paradise —a significant symbol of a stony-hearted system of teaching. On the Selkirk pulpit it would have been more appropriate to have depicted the attractions of the Cross, drawing all men everywhere into Paradise regained. For this end Christ died and rose again. For the same end ought all His ministers to rise into the pulpit and point the soul to Him as its 'resurrection and life.' This grand feature in the evangelical teaching of Mr Lawson remained upon it through life, only becoming more and more settled, and softly brilliant, as he himself grew in grace, and in 'the knowledge and faith' of

his Divine Master. His comportment in the pulpit was suitable to the lessons which were taught there, grave and impressive beyond what is common. Had Cowper known him, it might have been said that he had Lawson in his eye when he wrote these exquisite lines:—

> 'I would express him simple, grave, sincere;
> In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain,
> And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,
> And natural in gesture; much impressed
> Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
> And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
> May feel it too; affectionate in look,
> And tender in address, as well becomes
> A messenger of grace to guilty men.'

He always lectured—that is, expounded Scripture—in the forenoons of the Sabbath. This custom prevails among all the Churches in Scotland, which sufficiently accounts for the proverbial acquaintance of the Scotch people with the Word of God. It is not practised in many of the evangelical Churches in England. Indeed, except of the few who 'have tasted of the good word of God,' the Scotch lecture is looked upon as a sort of lame apology for the required service, as a put-off in lack of something more substantial. Hence it is not popular. It is to be hoped that a change in this respect is near, and that, when a better taste has been cultivated, and a higher degree of piety has been reached, this '*searching*' of the Scriptures will be regarded not only to be a duty, but a decided and most beneficial improvement upon the system. The Selkirk expositions were masterpieces of correct exegesis, and were perhaps as thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Scripture as any uninspired teaching could be. His minute acquaintance with 'all Scripture' accounts for this. He was independent of the printed text. Having read the passage to be explained, he shut the Bible and proceeded in his illustrations, from verse to verse, with perfect accuracy. Thus, how-

ever instructive the lecture itself might be, the people were in no danger of applying to it the saying on the 'notes of Persius,' that the 'sauce was better than the fish.' In those expositions he availed himself of the stores of his mind, especially to illustrate and enforce such passages of Scripture as are sometimes considered to be too abstruse for comprehension, or too barren for utility. It was his delight to bring forth the gold treasured in them.

As a minister, Dr Lawson lived all his days on the most friendly terms with his congregation. Of placid temper, wise forbearance, and conciliatory spirit, he went out and in among them, and his steps were gentle as the fall of moonlight. With his elders, plain and unlettered, but God-fearing men, he was not unnecessarily, but pleasantly familiar. He ruled not them, but the Church along with them. Though universally allowed to be one of the wisest of men, he took their counsel with becoming respect. On one occasion a case of considerable difficulty was before the session. Dr Lawson stated his views upon it carefully and at length. They were just coming to a decision, when one of the elders stepped forth and gave quite a different view of the case from that of the moderator, who at once gave way, with the remark, 'Well, I did not think of that. I feel greatly obliged to you for stating your view of the matter, and I see that if we had not taken that view, we should have come to a wrong conclusion,' —a scene and a saying which illustrate the old Spanish proverb—

'El sabio muda consejo, el necio no,'

which, being interpreted, is, 'A wise man changes his mind, a fool never will.'

He was in a very special manner a 'son of consolation.' His letters to the bereaved were really heavenly; and his visits to the sick and dying were as cold waters to a thirsty soul. Whatever the disease might be, he never shrank from his duty A young minister obtained from him the following

characteristic reply, in answer to a request for his advice on this subject: 'I always feel it to be my duty to visit the sick, though their diseases be infectious. There is little danger of infection in so short a visit as is proper in such cases, and precautions against danger may be used. We are always safest in the path of duty, and God is a powerful preserver.' His wonderful knowledge of the Bible, and his readiness and tact in applying its truths and comforts, qualified him, beyond many, for this most important department of a pastor's duty. He received, during the course of his ministry, many affecting proofs of his usefulness in it. On their dying beds, his people made known to him how God had blessed his ministry to their souls. It speaks volumes for his piety and conscientiousness, that he never allowed other considerations to stand in the way of these visits of mercy and compassion. He was a profound thinker, and an enthusiastic student; but it was never felt by him to be any sacrifice, to go forth from his study to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction; to cheer the broken in heart; and to point the eye of the dying sinner to the Lamb of God. That early trial of his, in all probability, was God's appointed mean to prevent him, in the peculiar constitution of his mental habits, from neglecting one of the first duties of his office.

He was very successful upon one occasion, and in a very simple manner too, in dispelling spiritual gloom from, and restoring the joy of God's salvation to, one of the oppressed daughters of Zion. When on a visit to Dr Husband and Mr Macfarlane, of Dunfermline, he was taken by them to see a venerable old lady, very highly respected by her ministers. She had been dwelling for years in 'Doubting Castle:' she found no sweetness in the promises; and went about, as without the sun, moaning over her hopeless condition. She could not be relieved from the agonizing conviction that she was, notwithstanding her Christian profession, 'in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity.' Her spiritual

comforters had despaired of her case. Failing themselves, they had taken many excellent ministers to converse and pray with her; but hitherto all in vain. When Dr Lawson was introduced to her, she unbosomed her grief to him in a long and heartrending strain, concluding with the severest reproaches against herself, and an expression of her fears, that as no sinner had ever been so great a one as she, so no punishment would be like to hers. He heard her patiently up to this, when he meekly and very solemnly broke silence, and said, 'Mrs P——, you have very accurately described the state of my own heart,—you have described the sinfulness I feel, and which, equally with you, I abhor and lament.' The good old woman looked confounded. She anticipated no such reply from such a saint; and, starting from her seat, said, 'What do I hear? Is it possible, Dr Lawson, that such is the state of your heart?' Silence was maintained for some minutes,—the words of the Professor went down into her soul; she turned them over and over in her mind, wondering how it could be that a saint, indisputably of the highest rank, should classify himself with such as she; and, at length, as the clouds were clearing off, and true light began to shine, she arose from her 'miry clay,' and ever afterwards, with her feet upon '*the rock*,' sung the new song of her redemption. The captive was set free, and was never again held in such bondage. It was a word in season, and the Spirit of the Lord gave it all its efficacy.

To the instruction of the young he gave sincere and zealous heed; and by them he was loved—almost adored, so happily united in him were gravity and suavity of manner. They kept silence at his counsel; and the light of his countenance they cast not down. But this will be more particularly illustrated when we come to consider his qualifications as a Professor of Theology.

He was a decided advocate for social prayer-meetings in Christian congregations, and took much pains to have them

established in his own. When encouraging his people to attend, he would remind them of these sweet Scriptures: 'As ointment and perfume rejoice the heart, so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.' 'If any two of you shall agree as to anything that ye shall ask, it shall be done of My Father who is in heaven.' One proof of his practical wisdom was his enjoining upon his people, in these exercises, '*brevity in prayer*.' He had a particular aversion to long prayers, whether in God's house or in private. 'We have no idea,' he used to say, 'how much the devil is served by long prayers.' Of the same mind was the great and good Robert Hall. He once complained of a certain individual, that he had 'first of all prayed him into a devotional state of mind, and then prayed him out of it.' His advice to his people was much the same as he was wont to give to his students, 'never to let their prayers before others exceed ten minutes in length,' —an advice founded on long experience, and the wisdom of which is apparent. Long morning prayers in public tend to quench at the very outset the true spirit of devotion, and generally assume rather the form of addresses than of direct supplication. Dr Lawson could never endure what he called 'preaching in prayer,' and pointed to it as an error into which young ministers especially were apt to fall. To avoid this error, he exhorted them to cultivate the form of 'direct petition,' knowing that, if this were attended to, no social or public prayers could be long protracted.

In these days, what were called 'diets of pastoral visitation,' were reckoned, and we hope still are, very important portions of clerical duty. Dr Lawson most conscientiously attended to them. Every family in his congregation was regularly visited in order. Indeed, he took great pleasure in it. On those occasions he was in the habit of asking the head of each family what chapter of Scripture had been last read at worship. Whatever the chapter was, and *without asking for a Bible*, he immediately proceeded to comment on it,

and apply it with singular wisdom to the circumstances of the family. A meeting for examination in the Church, or other convenient place, usually terminated the diet.

Dr Pringle mentions that he 'went with him one evening to the church to witness one of these "examinations." After the adults had been catechized, he turned to the children, his questions to whom were wonderfully characterized by simplicity and clearness, while the substance of them was the reverse of superficial. His condescending and winning manner elicited ready and cheerful answers, to the delight, and sometimes to the surprise of the audience. On the way home Dr Lawson adverted, with evident satisfaction, to these replies of the children, and seemed perfectly unconscious of his own aptness in the matter.'

When out upon such diets of clerical duty in the country districts, it was customary in these days to have some 'entertainment' ready for the minister, and, as a matter of course, wine or whisky was included. The custom now is happily denounced, and, it is to be hoped, will soon disappear. Though very temperate, Dr Lawson was not an abstainer, except, like many others in his day, from sugar, that he might thereby testify against slavery and the slave-trade; but one of his remarks on the use of strong drink was, 'I think every minister should be able to take a little, and for this reason: When I came to Selkirk, I was visiting in the country. Among others, I called upon a worthy woman, who lived six or seven miles out of the town. She asked me to taste a little spirits, but I declined. I learned afterwards that the good woman's feelings had been hurt. She had sent all the way to Selkirk for some good whisky wherewith to treat her minister, and was quite offended because I refused to partake. Ministers, therefore, should be able to take a little, just a little spirits.'

No wonder though reverence for such a man of God as this rose high in the vales of Ettrick and Tweed, and that the

memory of his 'walk and conversation' is still blessed among the dwellers therein. This habit of pastoral visiting had many advantages, especially as enabling him to become better acquainted with his flock. It also attached them more and more to himself and to his ministry. The congregation worshipping at Selkirk consisted of a few of the burgh people, but chiefly of the neighbouring farmers and shepherds. It was a peculiarly interesting sight when they were all seated on a Sabbath in the house of God; the more so, if in winter. Most of them were wrapped up in the shepherd's plaid, and at their feet were couched the shepherds' dogs. Of the latter it is storied that their presence could not have been known, so quietly did they behave themselves. Sometimes the music drew from the more sensitive of them a low and prolonged whine; and none knew better than they did when the benediction was to be pronounced. They at once started to their feet, wagged their tails, and slowly marched out with their masters.

The missionary enterprise was dear to his heart, and he laboured to indoctrinate his people with their obligations to Christ in respect of the extension of His kingdom. His admirable sermon before the Edinburgh Missionary Society, which is afterwards to be noticed, proves what lofty and liberal ideas he had upon the subject, while the liberality of his people, considering their circumstances, proved that they and their pastor were in harmony.

Dr Lawson, indeed, seems to have been in advance of his denomination in this as in other things. At a very early period he became the advocate for an addition of appropriate hymns to the psalmody; and every prudent and practicable proposal to improve the circumstantials of church government or devotion met with his ready support. The entire character, in short, of a Christian pastor was beautifully developed in his life—it was 'as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' He was most

conscientious in the discharge of all duty in public and in private. The deep and solemn respect paid to him, while alive, by the whole neighbourhood; the sincere sorrow which was generally felt for his loss when he fell asleep in Jesus; and the still unrelenting reverence for his memory which pervades the people of Selkirk and the county, is a certificate of character which comparatively few merit, and which stamps him as having been a working minister who never needed to be ashamed.

He thus 'fulfilled his course' among a people who knew his worth, and among rural scenes of surpassing beauty. Not many rich, and not any noble, and few, if any, that were learned, enjoyed a ministry which has never been surpassed for all the excellences that go to make up the Christian pastorate. He never coveted a change. He loved his people, and was satisfied to spend and be spent for them, and, to a great extent, they were worthy of him. His weekly congregation assembled from homes on the banks of the Tweed, the Ettrick, the Yarrow, and the Gala—some from farm-steadings in the upland vales, and others from distant cottages amid the heathery hills. Maintaining frequent and friendly intercourse with each member of his widely scattered flock, and holding stated annual diets of visitation and examination in every household, he was necessarily much in the country, and was intimately acquainted with nature in all her varied moods and forms. Shrouded in winter bleakness, or arrayed in summer verdure, he ever gazed upon her with a poet's eye. He often confessed that amid her scenery his spirit was refreshed, and braced, and soothed, and his thoughts caught up to the high and holy things of God. He loved, indeed, above all, 'the habitation of God's house;' but he exceedingly, also, enjoyed to meditate on His work in the magnificent temple which His own hands had framed and reared. The appearance of the mist hovering over the water-courses, or slowly creeping up the mountain side—the thunder-cloud leaping

from one hill-top to another—the setting sun sinking in the western horizon, and painting the heights around 'lone St Mary's silent loch,' would sometimes fill him with intense emotion, and even cause the tears of a pious genius to trickle down his cheeks. Washington Irving attributed that genial and imaginative turn of mind which imparts such pleasing freshness to his works, to the influence of the beautiful in nature, amid which he dwelt on the banks of the Hudson. In like manner, we may believe that the sweet and placid scenery amid which Dr Lawson lived and laboured contributed not a little in fostering his winning simplicity of character, and in imparting to his mind that tone of quiet strength and beauty by which it was unquestionably distinguished.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FRIEND AND HIS CORRESPONDENTS.

Dr Lawson lived, as we have seen, amid scenes of surpassing interest and beauty. He knew no other lands. These were his 'continent,' his 'incidents of travel;' and all his 'pencillings by the way' were taken from among them. They were all the world to him, and, by his great mind, were drawn out into dimensions of sufficient magnitude for every pleasant and useful purpose. He enjoyed them when *alone*, and oft resorted to them for the refreshing of his spirit and the expansion of his thoughts. And yet, amid such lovely scenes, he never was alone. He felt that 'the Father' was always with him, for a devout mind like his could not study nature without elevation to nature's God. At the same time, he loved the society of his chosen friends, and was never happier than when he accompanied them in their rambles along the banks of the Yarrow, the Ettrick, and the Tweed. Though a profound student, he was as profound a friend. He dearly loved his book and his hour of prayer, but he also dearly loved his Christian associates, and revelled in their society or correspondence. Some have thought of him as an ascetic —almost a stoic—than which nothing could be more wide of the truth. Apart from his official, his friendships were his most conspicuous positions. They were the illuminations of his character, if not to a large extent *his public life*, occupying and exercising his thoughts, giving the peculiar tinge to his social virtues, and causing himself to be seen, and felt, and known to be; they broadened and widened the sphere of his

influence, and kept his light from going out under a bushel. They were, moreover, his *amusements*. He took his mental and moral relaxations out of them. There his own great mind was unbent, and buoyantly sported itself with the congenial minds of the chosen few. He admired nature; but he loved and revered man—Christian man especially—and, above all, devout man in fellowship with God. None knew better than he, that

> 'On earth there's nothing great but man,
> In man there's nothing great but mind.'

When at any time his friends were met, after a few days spent with him at Selkirk, their faces seemed to shine as they spoke of the feast to soul and mind from which they had returned. Their unanimous testimony is, that, with all his learning, he was not a mere scholar or self-indulging student; certainly not 'telluris inutile pondus,' but *a man* in every sense of the word, though rich rather than racy in conversation, and more inclined, upon the whole, to the receptive than the communicative. In conversational powers, however, he was far from being deficient. He was never at a loss to give his mind, whatever might be the topic under review; and though his words were felt to be weighty, no one ever considered them dictatorial. He never *lectured* in the social circle. He spoke not as if he were a monopolist, but as if he were privileged and expected to speak. He had a vast deal more knowledge and wisdom than Coleridge, but nothing can be conceived more antithetical than their modes of talk. The 'Jupiter tonans' style, large and smashing paragraphs, or oracular responses, had not even their echoes in the gentle but massive proverbs of Lawson. His conversation was equally far from the Johnsonian style, 'Πολυφλοισβοιο θαλασσης,' and totally lacked that tendency to *bully* which weakened and discoloured the otherwise grand and sagacious talk of the Bolt Court philosopher. There are few now living who remember

it; but from such as do, we have heard the highest testimony to the delightful ease with which, in friendly converse, Dr Lawson identified himself with the views, the prejudices, and sympathies of others. Dr Brown used to say, when reverting to Dr Lawson in conversation, that, when he expressed his sentiments on any subject, it was just like letting go a piece of his mind; that there was nothing like labour or effort in it; that it was a dispensation, at his ease, from stores treasured up, without the slightest hesitation as to the matter, and without dubiety as to the accuracy of his statements.

Dr Lawson took a deep interest in all that was going on in the neighbourhood and in the world around him. It did not *appear*, but it was really so; and yet he was no gossip—the very reverse—what he liked to hear was what was generally interesting. Hence he relished nothing so much as a free and easy chat with some of the more intelligent members of his congregation, especially upon the doings and character of public men. He was very cautious in expressing his opinion of others, especially of ministers, and never spoke or allowed others in his presence to speak evil of any one. He devoted a short time every day to keep up with the current literature of the press, and regularly read the newspapers. Though not of Mrs Sidney Smith's mind, that 'a family could not prosper without a newspaper,' he appreciated the judicious use of one. The 'Star' and other political periodicals were, in their place, of deep interest to him. He did not, however, allow the newspaper to lie in his study, and, like the dog in the manger, bark and snarl at all other reading—as we shall see in the following chapter. Madame de Stael thinks that the newspapers constitute the sole reading of three-fourths of the nation. Whether her arithmetic be correct or not, there can be little doubt of the too monopolizing influence of such secular reading at present. The daily paper is now the danger, and may be more resorted to than the daily prayer by multitudes who profess the Lord Jesus. Much of

the cheap literature now-a-days is all the reading that thousands get. We may expect, not a race of giants, but of dwarfs, to arise out of it. Dr Lawson's paper, once or twice a week, told him all about this world that he cared to know, and never made more solemn reading insipid to him, nor his habits of reflection to be of the earth earthy. It is rather interesting, however, to know, that, though much more a man of the world than he was, his neighbour, Sir Walter Scott, cared little, if anything, for the newspaper. Lockhart tells us that Sir Walter read fewer newspapers than any man he ever knew who had the habit of reading. How are we to account for this strange phenomenon? Can it be, after all, much as religious study is decried, that its tendency is far more decidedly to interest us in the real well-being of mankind, than the abstraction of a fine phrenzy, and the industry of a romantic genius? We may be sure that it is so. The study of God expands and warms the human heart. The worship of any fine art contracts the sphere of sympathy, and gives to the idolater a microscopic eye.

Among the other social and friendly qualifications of Dr Lawson, was his love of music. He knew all the ordinary psalm tunes, and sung them at family worship. He had no sympathy with the semi-savage remark of one who, in decrying music, declared that it not only gave him no new ideas, but disturbed those which he had already acquired. Dr Lawson's tastes lay nearer to the school of Luther, whose testimony is, that, 'next to theology, music must have the highest place and the greatest honour.' From what is told of this singularly good-hearted man, we believe that, had he lived till now, he would have been among the foremost to assist in raising the ordinance of praise in the churches from the dusty and droning estate into which it has fallen among our people. It may, however, be worthy the consideration of our music reformers, whether the best plan for improving *public* music in churches, may not be to commence this refor-

mation by encouraging *family worship*, and having the taste for sacred song cultivated, as Luther did, and many Germans do, at the morning and evening services of the domestic altar.

It is well known that Dr Lawson was a great smoker. He had been afflicted from his youth with asthma. His physician prescribed the pipe. He was cured of the asthma, but continued the use of the weed. He had through life a rather severe morning cough, and thought that this habit released him of its severity. He did not seem to have any religious scruples upon this point. Sugar in his tea he ceased to use, to show his horror at the slave-trade; but he believed tobacco to be grown and manufactured without slave labour. At any risk he would have thrown away the pipe too, if he had associated it with 'the accursed thing.' Some of his friends, such as Dr Husband of Dunfermline, and Mr Haddin of Limekilns, were as sturdy smokers as himself; and when they met together and entered upon the stories of other days, their heads were soon 'in nubibus,' and, though scarcely visible, their hearty voices told how happy they were. Robert Hall was also a great smoker. He acquired the habit at Cambridge, in order to enjoy the society of Dr Parr. When Olinthus Gregory expressed surprise that he should so indulge himself, he replied, 'O, sir, I am only qualifying myself for the society of a Doctor of Divinity, and this (holding up the pipe) is my test of admission.' Gregory gave him to read Adam Clarke's pamphlet on 'The Use and Abuse of Tobacco;' and when Hall returned it, he said, 'I can't refute his arguments, and I can't give up smoking.' None of Dr Lawson's friends, however, claimed such a preparation in order to enjoy his conversation and society. Without judging of the habit in his instance, and without at all condemning in the slump the practice of it by many, certainly the modern abuse of this weed, by hundreds who have no excuse whatever to offer for the indulgence, should be deprecated. It is lamentable to notice in some, while in the prime of life, the nervous shaking

of the hand, and the pale or sallow complexion of the cheek; traceable not to severe study, but to the slavish use of the pipe. It were a good service, especially to students of divinity, to get them persuaded to abandon it. We pronounce it neither a lazy, nor a dirty, nor a demeaning habit; but we denounce it in general, as injurious to health of body, and to pith, if not soundness, of mind.

It is rather singular, that, being amid so many beautiful fishing streams, Dr Lawson had no love of the Waltonian art. He had frequent visits from his friends on fishing excursions, who dilated on the pleasures and benefits of the sport; but he was not moved to try the rod. Some of his students were great fishers, and were tempted by the Ettrick and the Tweed, whose running streams they often visited. He did not forbid them, from which we infer that he had no conscientious scruples upon the matter. Dr John Brown had an instinctive aversion to the sport, *as cruel*, while Dr Wardlaw, on the other hand, pursued it enthusiastically. Upon this as upon other uncertain points, good men must be allowed to differ. It must be admitted that Dr Lawson's students, on the whole, excelled in a far more honourable vocation—as 'fishers of men.'

But it is now time to notice a few of those friends and contemporaries between whom and Dr Lawson there existed, during their respective lives, such an intimacy as not only to justify but necessitate some brief allusion to them. Some of them were the men of their day in the Burgher Synod, and distinguished ornaments of our Church. It has often been regretted that no adequate records were made of their lives, and that they have been allowed almost to drop out of recollection. If, in this biography of their illustrious friend, there be but a partial resurrection of their names and virtues, it may not have been written in vain. To Lawson himself it would have been far more gratifying to have had their names, than his own, inscribed upon the monumental tablet. By this

means, too, we shall gain a natural and graceful admission of the very few letters of Lawson that have been preserved, into these pages; letters most characteristic of the man, and of peculiar and intrinsic excellence. In these he will speak for himself, and for others too. They will be read with high zest by all who love exquisite simplicity of style, and wisdom in all things as unaffected as genuine. Bishop Warburton tells us, that Thurloe's large collection of letters gives us a thorough insight into the genius of his times and contemporaries. If we had possession of all or most of the Selkirk correspondence, a similar compliment might have been paid to them; but it is to be deeply regretted that only a few have survived the vicissitudes of the last fifty years. These few give us only glimpses of the grand things which we might otherwise have enjoyed. Such as they are, however, they are here given to the reader; and whosoever he be, of this he may be assured, that they will amply repay perusal. Dr Lawson was not what is called a letter-writer: his correspondence was by no means voluminous; but it was select and uniformly sincere, and to some good purpose. Had it been with him as with some, who would 'as soon open an artery as an inkbottle,' the materials for illustrating his character must have been fewer in number than they are. They are not substitutes for, though to a great extent they supply the want of, a diary.

Andrew Swanston has been already noticed as, perhaps, in early life the dearest friend Dr Lawson ever had. The attachment was mutual. Their natural dispositions seem to have very nicely fitted into one another. 'Next to Jonathan,' Dr Lawson said, 'I believe Andrew Swanston to be the most amiable man that ever lived.' After his early death, a brief but chaste sketch of his character was written by the Rev. D. Greig, of Lochgelly, and prefixed to an edition of his sermons in two volumes. An extract is here subjoined, not only to memorialize him, but as one of the few remains of the Lochgelly divine:—

'The author of the following discourses was the eldest son of the Rev. John Swanston, minister of the Associate Congregation of Kinross, and some time Professor of Divinity under the Associate Synod. After having acquired the knowledge of the Latin language at the Grammar School of Perth, he attended the University of Edinburgh; and, in the progress of his education, distinguished himself by a love of literature and attention to his studies, and a capacity for improvement in useful knowledge. When he had finished his preparatory studies, he entered on the study of theology, which he prosecuted under the direction of the Rev. John Brown, of Haddington, who conceived a high idea of his talents and qualifications for the service of God in the Gospel of His Son. Having gone through the usual course of theological studies, he was admitted to trial for license before the Associate Presbytery of Dunfermline, and, by the discourses he delivered, gave the highest hopes of his future usefulness.

'In the course of his trials, he was led to reflect on the awful importance of the ministerial office, and the indispensable necessity of personal religion to his undertaking it, either with safety to himself or benefit to the Church of Christ. These reflections issued in deep convictions of his own unworthiness, and awful apprehensions of Divine wrath. His distress of mind was inexpressible, and threatened for some time the dissolution of his frame. All thoughts of commencing to preach were now abandoned, and absorbed in the inquiry, "What shall I do to be saved?" The terrors of the Almighty distracted his soul, and drove him to the most desperate conclusions. He would sometimes abstain from prayer and other religious duties, from an apprehension that, by engaging in them, he would only incur the guilt of profanity. He was afraid to look into his Bible, for he imagined that there remained nothing for him but "a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." Some gleams of hope, however, would at times break in upon his mind, from

the consideration of the riches of Divine mercy, and the grace and all-sufficiency of Christ; but though the distress of his soul became less violent, he continued for a considerable time in a very disconsolate state. The Lord, however, interposed for his relief, by giving him such a discovery of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ, as dissipated his fears, and filled him with joy and peace in believing.

'This happy alteration in the state of his mind is acknowledged by him in a letter to a friend, dated Dec. 4, 1778, of which the following is an extract:—

'"My dear Friend,—You know what desperate conclusions I was wont, on some occasions, to draw against myself, and how positive I was in them; yet, through the goodness of God, I have lived to see that they are groundless: and, however defective my past experience or present exercises may be, I am fully convinced that it is my duty to believe that, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, I shall be saved, even as others. I doubt not but that what I have mentioned will give you real pleasure, and you will be disposed to glorify God in me."

'It was not long after this that he was prevailed on to accept of license to preach the Gospel. The discourses now offered to the public were all composed and delivered shortly after he was licensed. Being under the necessity, from the time of his commencing preacher, of delivering several discourses every Lord's day, he had little leisure to attend to what is called *composition*. Some of his discourses, not inferior in merit to any of the rest, are known to have been the production of a few hours. This being considered, the accuracy of arrangement and propriety of expression, everywhere observable in his discourses, cannot but give a high idea of his talents.

'Mr Swanston had not been long employed as a public teacher, when it was evident that he was very highly esteemed by all who came within the reach of his instructions. The

Associate Congregation of Perth, after having a few trials of his gifts, unanimously called him to be their minister, and had the near prospect of enjoying his stated ministrations.

'The pastoral relation, however, between him and them never took place, for at this time he began to doubt of the Divine authority of the Presbyterial form of Church government, and at length gave up all connection with the Secession. Not long after he embraced the views of the Antipædobaptists, and was admitted a member of their communion. Difference of sentiment taking place between him and his Antipædobaptist brethren, occasioned his seclusion from their society. He still, however, retained the characteristical views of these Christians, and employed himself, as he found opportunity, in preaching the Gospel of the kingdom. To this service he may be said to have fallen a sacrifice, for it was when he was employed in it that he caught a severe cold, from which he never recovered. His constitution, which was always delicate, soon exhibited strong symptoms of a consumption; and his friends now beheld, with deep concern, his dissolution fast approaching. He died at Glasgow, on the 15th of November 1784, in the thirty-third year of his age, expressing an entire resignation to the will of his heavenly Father, and a confident expectation of his future felicity. *All is well, all is well*, were the last words which he was heard to utter.

'His character must be still fresh in the remembrance of those who had the happiness of being acquainted with him; but for the sake of others, the following delineation of it may not be unnecessary:—

'His understanding was uncommonly acute and penetrating, clearly apprehending divine truths in their various relations and consequences. His powers of discrimination were strong, by which he readily perceived what was proper to be said or omitted in the illustration of his subject. His luminous conceptions of divine truths enabled him to express

them in language at once perspicuous and forcible. His taste was just, and capable of giving elegance to his compositions, if this had been the object of his study. He was cautious in admitting religious principles while he perceived not the evidence of their truth; but, when the evidence presented itself to his mind, he was resolute in adhering to them, and ready to profess them at the expense of all that was dear to him. To the authority of God, speaking in the Scriptures, he paid an implicit obedience; but he would not suffer human authority to dictate to him in matters of religion. *One is your Master, even Christ*, was a saying which he held in profound veneration. The love of Christ, in redeeming him by His blood, appeared marvellous in his eyes, strongly affected his heart, and obtained a commanding influence over his conduct. To the honour of his Redeemer he was ready to make the most expensive sacrifices. *Things not seen and eternal* were perceived by him in a strong and impressive light, gave a noble elevation to his mind, and made him look down with holy indifference on the honours, and pleasures, and advantages of the world. His manner of life declared plainly that he sought another and a better country; and few of the saints have attained to that degree of heavenly-mindedness which was conspicuous in his conversation.

'In social intercourse he was distinguished by a suavity of manners which was peculiarly engaging; modest, affable, polite, gentle, and amiable, he never failed to rise in the esteem and affections of those with whom he conversed. His great humility made him respect the sentiments of others who were inferior to himself in understanding, while his happy talent of seizing openings for introducing agreeable and useful hints, or improving on those of others, rendered his conversation at once entertaining and edifying. In rational, moral, and religious conversation, he greatly delighted; and no one retired from his company without feeling pleasure or reaping improvement.

'His manner as a public speaker was simple and graceful, earnest and impressive, indicating the powerful hold which his subject had taken of his mind, and calculated to call off the attention of his hearers from himself to the all-interesting truths which he was declaring. He declared the counsel of God with a plainness which met the apprehensions of ordinary capacities, and, at the same time, with a dignity which commanded the respect and secured the approbation of the more intelligent part of his audience. His action was easy and natural, arising from the impulse of the moment, and serving to express the feelings of his soul. Serious and judicious Christians, after hearing him, felt a disposition to say, *Thanks be to God for the glorious Gospel of our salvation; and may the Lord of the harvest send forth many such labourers into his harvest!*'

On hearing of this accomplished youth's death, Professor Brown, of Haddington, said, 'Andrew Swanston will have found a church to his mind now;' and Lawson often referred to him, saying, 'Heaven will be all the sweeter to me, that Andrew Swanston is there.' It is known that the late Dr Peddie, of Edinburgh, excelled in lecturing upon Scripture. He himself accounted for any virtue he possessed in this way, to his having often heard young Swanston in Perth, from whom, he said, he derived his first conception of what a lecture ought to be. His friend's 'divisive courses' did not in the least abate the ardour of natural affection. He wrote to him only two years before his death the following admirable letter:—

'SELKIRK, *March* 2, 1782.

'DEAR ANDREW,—I do not know well whither to address this letter, but by what information I could get, I hope it may find you in Glasgow. You have, it seems, left our communion; but there are two things that give me much satisfaction. One is, that I am sure you will never be alienated

from the friends of your youth. The other is a great deal more comfortable, that you will be always a Christian, and therefore never unhappy.

'By what party name you are now distinguished, I do not certainly know. I believe, if I did, I should have a more favourable thought of it for your sake, although I am far from thinking you infallible. Whatever your connections are, you will find them to be men like us. In heaven only you will find perfection of goodness; and there, I hope, we shall in a short time be, never to be separated, or to entertain discordant thoughts any more.

'I should be exceedingly glad of a visit from you; but this, though promised several years ago, I believe I cannot reasonably expect. In place of it, give me the benefit of your prayers, which may do me still more service. I stand in great need of it.

'I should be much obliged to you, if you would, as soon as you can, write me a long letter. Fill it with what you please, except telling me that you retain your friendship for me; and inform me of the health of Mr Henderson, and the welfare of your friends, whom I love for your sake, and your father's, and their own. You know always where I am to be found, and can forgive me for any aversion to write when I know not what to say. Were you to become a Roman Catholic, I could not lose my friendship for you, although I might be in doubt whether or not you had lost your senses. May God bless you and guide you.—I am, ever yours,

'George Lawson.'

Many years subsequent to Andrew Swanston's death, we find Dr Lawson in correspondence with Mr John Swanston, of Glasgow, who inherited not a little of Andrew's amiableness and worth. It is interesting to observe in the following letters the transference of friendly regard from the one brother to the other.

To Mr and Mrs John Swanston.

'My dear Friends,—Having opportunity by some of my own family, I could not deny myself the pleasure of letting you know that I am still alive, and in as good health as I can reasonably expect, and that I entertain as warm an attachment to you as I felt in my younger days. My daughter Nancy intends to be one of your visitors. She will never forget what she owes you, and I hope will be the better, through life and through eternity, for what she has heard from you.

'I often call to mind the days of youth in which I spent many pleasant days with you at Kinross. These days have long since fled. But it will be my own fault if the profit I derived, or might have derived from them, is ever lost. I believe a turn is given to the mind by the companions of one's youth, which, for the most part, has an influence on the remainder of one's days. This observation, I believe, you must both have often made, and that it has had a powerful influence on the education you have given to our dear young friend (your daughter[1]), to whom you look for some of your chief comforts in that declining period of life which is before you, if God is pleased to lengthen out your lives a little longer. May you long enjoy that pleasure which her life and health, her temper and behaviour, give you. I am persuaded that it would be bitter to her as death, to be wanting in her endeavours to give you all that satisfaction which parents have a right to expect from a child so tenderly and carefully educated. Yet I doubt not that God Himself is your chief joy. Unhappy must the happiest of those men and women be, whose happiness rests upon anything so precarious as that which is but a vapour, which appeareth but for a little while, and then vanisheth away. . . . I lately had the pleasure of seeing Mr Johnston, of Ecclefechan. He is at present,

[1] The late Mrs William Graham, of Lancefield.

I hear, in good health for his years.—I am, yours most affectionately, 'GEORGE LAWSON.'

To John Swanston, Esq., Glasgow.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—I thank Mrs and Miss Swanston, along with yourself, for their continued friendship to my daughter Nancy, and for extending it to her sister. Enmities should be always shortened; but friendships ought to be immortal. Among those who know the Gospel, they will be immortal in the strictest sense.

'I was much pleased with what you said concerning the days that are long since passed, never to return. Your thoughts are congenial with my own. Were I to live as long as the antediluvians, and retain my faculties, I would not forget those companions of youth with whom I spent the pleasantest hours of that pleasant season of life. And none of them were dearer to me than your brother, now in a better world. An eternal separation from such friends would be a tremendous prospect. This, though not the chief part of the punishment of the ungodly in a future world, could not be compensated by the pleasures of sin in this life, although they were a thousand times sweeter, and to last a thousand times longer than they ever did. The remembrance of such departed joys will bring more pleasure, even in this world, than pain to our hearts, if we make that use that we ought of it, by placing our affections on those things that are above, where some of our best friends now are, and where He who is infinitely better than all earthly friends ever is. There are three of us still alive; and if anything could make me proud, it would be the thought that I had so long retained Mr Greig's friendship and yours, without diminution. The best title I have to it is my esteem of you both, and the grateful sense I have ever felt of your unabated kindness.

'When our friend, Miss Kitty, looks back fifty years hence—if kind Providence spare her so long—she will recol-

lect many pleasant friends that are lost for a time; but I hope she will have the consolation to reflect, that she did her duty to them whilst she enjoyed their society; and to be persuaded, that such as were once dearest to her heart are in a place of felicity, where she hopes soon, through the grace of Christ, to join them.

'It would be superfluous in me to lengthen out this letter by advices to Miss Swanston, in addition to what she has received from Solomon, and from other counsellors of the present time, and of the times of old. Yet there is one maxim which I sometimes inculcate on young persons, that I think may be useful to them—always to think, and speak, and act, as they will wish to have done fifty years hence, or whensoever they look back in years to come! The days of old age would not be such evil days as they commonly are, if men could look back with satisfaction on the years long past, and never to return. . . . May you all long enjoy in this world the blessings of the seed of the righteous. We will seldom see one another whilst we live; but the hope of being together through endless ages, would bring down a portion of the joys of heaven to the earth.—I am, with sincerest affection, yours, 'GEORGE LAWSON.'

GEORGE HENDERSON, of Turfhills, has been mentioned in a former chapter, as another of the early and devoted friends of Lawson. Their acquaintanceship dated from college days; was ripened in Kinross-shire, when studying under Professor Swanston, and afterwards, when at the Haddington Hall. When Mr Henderson was about to be ordained over Shuttle Street Congregation, Glasgow, the Presbytery of Glasgow requested his Selkirk friend to preach the ordination sermon, which he accordingly did. The course of this friendship ran rather more smoothly than the former one, but not more profoundly. Mr Henderson, however, like Swanston, soon departed. His early death left a deep im-

pression on Lawson; and, together with those of Bruce and Swanston, greatly helped to deepen upon him that invariable seriousness, of which, even in his hours of ease, he could never be entirely divested. Mr Henderson was highly esteemed in the city of his habitation; and was gradually rising to eminence and influence, both as a preacher and a citizen, when 'he was not, for God took him.' He received the following consolatory letter from Selkirk, when in his last illness:—

'SELKIRK, *August* 14, 1783.

'DEAR GEORGE,—I am sorry to hear that you are still in a poor state of health; but glad, at the same time, to hear that you do not murmur at the hand by which you are afflicted. I hope you are preserved in patience by the same spirit that sustained our glorious pattern, when He was offering up Himself a sacrifice for us, and leaving us an example that we should follow His steps. May God still teach you to number the days of your affliction, according to Paul's Christian arithmetic, 2 Cor. iv. 17.

'You have Christ, and (if we may mention them in the same sentence) you have prophets and apostles, as an example of patience under long-continued trials; you have promises of support to a conclusion of your trials, as soon as infinite wisdom sees it proper, and of reaping in joy in due time.

'Cleaving to the Lord in the exercise of the proper graces under temptations, is one great characteristic of the followers of Christ; and what believer would not frequently endure the trial, when at the end of it is a crown, not of gold and pearl, but of life, even a crown which the Lord hath promised and will give?

'It would make you very happy if you were informed that any of your beloved friends had it in his power to effect your recovery. But how pleasant is it to consider that a Friend, unspeakably kinder, can command deliverance at His pleasure,

and delays it only because it is an expression of greater kindness to leave you a little longer in your present situation!

'It would be much easier for me to dwell on this subject than to bear your troubles, were they laid on my shoulders. But the richest consolations in the world are addressed to us by One who bore sorrows unspeakably exceeding even the sore afflictions of David and Job. I think a greater sorrow can scarcely be felt by us, than that which the apostles experienced when their Master was about to be taken from them; and the sermon spoken to them, and left on record for our benefit, must be abundantly sufficient, if it is applied by the Spirit, to replenish the soul with gladness and triumph, whatever our outward circumstances may be.—I am, etc.,

'GEORGE LAWSON.'

DAVID GREIG, with the exception of Andrew Swanston, seems to have been the most beloved of all his early associates. They had, through life, a deep mutual respect for each other's talents and piety. Lethangie House was the nursery of their glowing loves; and, as we have seen, Orwell rather than Selkirk would have been Lawson's choice, that he might be near his friend, who became the seceding minister at Lochgelly, only a few miles from Kinross. It must ever be a regret that no memoir of this imposing and admirable divine has been written. For fifty-one years he laboured in the above retired village, and died in 1823, Lawson having preceded him by only two years into eternity. Few men ever left the world, of whom so much good and so little evil could be told. He was an extraordinary man. In person he was unusually tall, and bulky in proportion. Dignity and solemnity seemed to labour for the ascendancy in his deportment. In the pulpit especially, he was of commanding and venerable appearance; and on all occasions there was a blending, in his expression, of the meek and the majestic, the serious and the affectionate. As a theologian, he had few

equals, and no superior, among his contemporaries. He had a learned and capacious mind. His discourses were of a high order of excellence; and, classed beside the works of Boston or the Erskines, they would not be found inferior: while, for force of reasoning, they were not behind Barrow, or Tillotson, or Charnock. The late learned and venerable Dr Dick, of Glasgow, was a great admirer of him. While a student, and when passing his vacations in Kinross-shire, at his paternal uncle's, he had sat often under Mr Greig's ministry with great delight, and ever reverted to it as a privilege of no common kind. Dr Lawson and Mr Greig were confidential and frequent correspondents. Some of the Selkirk letters to Lochgelly have been preserved, and are now subjoined, without note or comment. Left to speak for themselves, they cannot fail to inform the reader, that friendship between such men was a plant of heavenly birth, and, having stood the shocks and storms of time, must now be in its full fruition in the paradise of God.

Dr Lawson to Mr Greig.

'SELKIRK, *Feby.* 1811.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your letter, after such a long intermission of epistolary correspondence, gave me great pleasure, as it gave me a new proof that I still possess what has been one of the chief pleasures of my life for almost half a century. I would be very ungrateful if I did not place a full confidence in your friendship; yet I have always felt a new joy in receiving new assurances of it from your own hand. But the information you gave me in your last letter (but one), of your son's recovery, afforded double satisfaction. I doubt not that it was an answer to many prayers. May you still have reason, on that, and many other accounts, to bless the Lord, who hath not turned away His mercy from you, nor your prayers from Him.

'I would have been glad that you had given me some

account of the state of your own health; but I am happy to hear that it is rather better than it was some time ago. You and I have tasted very much of the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. We must not hope to escape the common lot of the sons of Adam; but we will praise the Lord for what is past, and trust Him for what is to come.

'I would have been glad, too, to hear of the welfare of your son Robert. I hope he will remember the God of his fathers, from Quebec or Montreal, or from any foreign land to which Providence may direct his steps.

'I was pleased to hear that your beloved family was entertained by the small book of sermons. The further they advance in life, they will find the more reason to derive their chief entertainment from the Bible, and from those precious doctrines which it teaches.

'I conclude from your letter, that my friend Mrs Greig enjoys her ordinary health. She has yet the prospect of several years before she arrives at our present period of life. But these years (if God is pleased to spare her) will appear a very short time when they are past. They will, however, be very pleasant in the review, if she is enabled to employ them as most persons wish to have done.

'You and I cannot often hope now to meet together; but I often look back with pleasure to days that I have spent in your society; and I would fain look forward with hope to an eternity to be spent with you in a better world, where we will regain the friends that we have lost. Do they not look down upon us with a much livelier interest in our welfare, than they had in the present world?—I remain, till death, and beyond death, your cordial friend, 'G. LAWSON.'

Dr Lawson to Mr Greig.

'SELKIRK, *September* 1815.

'BELOVED FRIEND,—You will not need to be told that your letter was very gratifying to us all. We were happy to hear

that you had suffered no material injury from your kind visit to us, and that our endeavours to make you happy during your continuance were not lost. We certainly would not be so ungrateful as not to wish and endeavour to make the time of your abode with us agreeable, and it was our happiness to enjoy the society of a friend disposed to be happy.

'We certainly cannot hope often to enjoy on earth such golden days as we have often enjoyed in one another's society; but I hope always to enjoy the fruits of the friendship I had the happiness in my early days to form with you. I am far from being so good a man as with this and my other advantages I might have been; yet I trust that good impressions never to be effaced have been the happy result of my cordial intercourse with you, and I would fain hope that I never will be separated from you for ever. I am thankful for almost a half century of your friendship already enjoyed. How thankful ought I to be for the hope (if I am not left to deceive myself) of an eternity to be spent in the society of my best friends, and of Him who is infinitely kinder and more amiable than all earthly friends put together!

'When you parted from us, your were consoled with the thought of returning to your beloved family, whilst my thoughts were in a great measure occupied by the employments of the season.

'When some of our chief pleasures are removed or interrupted for a long and uncertain space of time, let us be thankful that we have so many other comforts left us, and that we are not altogether incapacitated for those businesses of life in which we are to be occupied till we receive our dismission.

'It is a part of our happiness, that when we cannot converse with our friends face to face, we can do it by letters. If our personal visits must be discontinued, our intercourse need not cease. I believe that we may often in our letters say much the same thing that we have said in former letters. But these old things have to me—and, I hope, to you also—a charm not

less pleasant than that of novelty. Nor are they altogether destitute even of that charm. You could not with certainty tell me twenty years ago, that you was to be as cordial a friend to me in my old age as in the days of my youth.—I am, ever yours, 'G. LAWSON.'

Dr Lawson to Mr Greig.

'SELKIRK, 29*th April* 1816.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am sorry that it is put out of my power to see you and my other brethren at the meetings of Synod. But all our earthly pleasures must suffer interruption or come to an end. And when some are taken from us, let us be thankful that so many are left, and that we have so much better in prospect.

'My hearing is considerably better than it once was, but I am under the necessity of being very careful to guard against accidents that may make it worse. I need your prayers both for myself and family, as one of my dear children is at present in distress, though I hope not in an alarming degree.

'Your last visit gives me great pleasure in reflecting on it, both as an expression of your unchanging friendship, and as it gave me an opportunity of seeing with mine own eyes, how much better your health was than I once expected ever to see it.

'You and I have now been long spared to our families and friends, and to one another. I frequently think of the period of life when men, much better than myself, were carried out of the world in good old age short of that which has been already granted to me, and to some of the dearest companions of my early days, whilst others of them are removed to that world from which there is no returning, and from which it would be worse than death to return. God forbid that I should be for ever separated from you, and from our beloved A. Swanston, and from his venerable father, and from our no less respected teacher, Mr Brown. I follow them *haud rassi-*

bus aquis, but I trust in the same righteousness through which they found acceptance before God.

'May God bestow His richest blessings on Mrs Greig, on your sons and daughters, and on all whom you love. I will never forget the kind hospitality which they have so often showed to the friend of their father's youth.

'It was but a very short time of life that David enjoyed the friendship of Jonathan, which afforded him more pleasure than the possession of the crown. How long you and I will yet have the pleasure of knowing that the other is in the land of the living we cannot tell, but we have reason to bless God for what is past, nor is it likely that death can now separate us for many years.—I am, ever yours, 'G. LAWSON.'

Dr Lawson to Mr Greig.

'SELKIRK, *August* 1816.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your letter came in good season, to turn my mind to the pleasure which I have long enjoyed in your cordial and steady friendship. After losing many of my early friends, I cannot, without thankfulness to God, think of the survivance of my dearest friend, of one at least than whom none was ever dearer to my heart.

'I call your letter a seasonable one, because I had received very unpleasant letters from England, and still live under the anxious apprehension of receiving more of the same kind. My beloved daughter, I am informed, is now almost in a hopeless state. I know that I give you pain by saying so; but I do it in the hope that your prayers will be useful to her, and to us who are here. The God who commands us to pray for one another never said to any of the seed of Jacob, Seek ye Me in vain.

'Dearly did I love my child, and well did she deserve my love; yet I am not without comfort. My son tells me that she still retains her cheerfulness, which he has no doubt is founded in part on religious considerations. It is difficult for

us to know our own hearts, and more so to know the hearts of others. But I humbly hope that, if it is not the will of God to restore her to us, He will receive her to Himself, which is far better.

'Eli had little reason to think that his sons would be blessed in their death; and yet, when it was announced to him, he said, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good." How much more ought I to acquiesce in the will of God, who has deprived me of some very pleasant children, but left me no reason to judge unfavourably of that state to which they went! What undeserved mercy does our gracious God mingle with too well deserved chastisement!

'The time will not now be long deferred till you and I must enter into that world into which some of the dear friends of our youth are long since gone. Although I never thought myself worthy of being compared to them, yet it is my humble desire and hope to be saved by that grace without which they must have perished as well as I. What precious consolations does our religion afford us! It turns our darkness into light. The face of my afflicted child was always pleasant and lovely in my sight; but, although I have little hope of ever beholding her again in this world, may I not humbly hope to see her with far more pleasure than ever.

'We are happy at the thought of the pleasure you enjoyed in your visit to us last harvest. You certainly did us a great favour in undertaking so long a journey to spend some days with us. I am happy that, by all accounts which I receive, your health is still better than it was a few years ago. May you be long spared to your family, and friends, and people.

'How unpleasant were Job's reflections when he thought of the time when his children were yet about him. My feelings, when I think of the children whom I have lost, or am about to lose, tend much to raise my admiration of the fortitude of his soul when he lost so many on one day, and not

one was left. What reason have you to be thankful, as I am sure you are, that all your family (except one) is spared to you. And I am thankful for God's goodness to you, and to myself also, in sparing so many of my children to this day.

'Those children of serious parents are cruel to their fathers and mothers, as well as to their own souls, who do not behave in such a manner that there will be hope in their death, if God should call them out of the world. May God long preserve your children, and our amiable sister, and enrich you all with his best blessings.—I am, ever yours, 'G. LAWSON.'

The late Drs Hall and Peddie, and Mr Lothian, of Edinburgh, Dr Waugh, of London, Dr Dick, of Glasgow, and others of that standing, were all on very intimate and friendly footing with the Professor at Selkirk. We have failed, however, in our efforts to discover any correspondence that passed between them. This is especially to be regretted, as there is no doubt that there must have been many interesting and important intercommunications, in Dr Peddie's instance at least. He and Dr Peddie were deeply implicated in what is called 'the Old Light Controversy,' and were, along with Dr Husband, of Dunfermline, the leaders of the debates in the Synod. Dr Peddie, however, was in the habit of destroying all his letters very shortly on receipt of them. It would have been an exceedingly rich contribution to this memoir, if records of these debates, of the private conversations upon them, and of the letters that were written by the parties, had been extant. As descriptions of character, manifestations of courage and pith in opposing intolerance, and specimens of truly Christian temper in controversy, they would have been memorials of the men and the times, alike racy and exemplary.

Dr JAMES HUSBAND occupies a distinguished place among the friendships of Lawson. As the successor of Ralph

Erskine, he could scarce fail to have been an object of interest to every good seceder; but, independent of that, he had talents that commanded the confidence and admiration of the Church. Dr William Peddie thus refers to him in the memoir of his father: 'It cannot be considered invidious to name Drs Husband, of Dunfermline, and Hall, of Edinburgh, both of them men of uncommon forensic ability, eloquent and skilful in debate, dignified and courteous in their manners. We have always understood that these eminent fathers stood in the very first rank among the public men of the Associate Synod.' Dr Husband's father, a respectable merchant in St Andrews, originated the Secession interest in that 'neuk of Fife,' and gave to his son an education to qualify him for the ministry in the new denomination. Young Husband was a first-class scholar, and wrangled it triumphantly both in the school and college of his native town, with students who afterwards rose to eminence. He was for a while classical tutor in the family of the Principal of the University. His pupil then, rose, in after life, to be Principal Brown of Aberdeen; and the high esteem of that distinguished man for his quondam grinder was maintained through life, demonstrating itself by the gift of D.D., which, at his request, the Senatus Academicus conferred on him. He died in May 1821, only one year and a few months after Dr Lawson. Dr Belfrage, of Falkirk, preached his funeral sermon, from which the following sketches of his character are taken:—

'His intellectual faculties were of no common order. His mind was acute and powerful, and enriched by regular and liberal study. His discourses were always prepared with care, and were marked by sublime conceptions of the Divine character and administration, the elaborate defence and illustration of the doctrines of grace, an accurate knowledge of the human heart and of all the varieties of human character, the fearless exposure of folly and vice, the most consolatory views of the trials of the good, and by the earnest enforce-

ment of every religious and moral duty. As an expositor of Scripture, he was far removed from all parade of critical skill —from that expansion and diffuseness in which the proper design of lecturing is forgotten, and from that flimsiness which leaves the passage almost untouched; but was distinguished by a clear discernment of its true sense, the vivid exhibition of its leading ideas, and by the ingenuity and the suitableness of his practical reflections. His style was earnest, perspicuous, and forcible; and not merely in the early periods of his ministry, but throughout his life, the language of his discourses was characterized by elegance and accuracy. His ornaments were selected with such judgment, introduced with such propriety, and managed so happily, that they never failed to strike or to charm. There was such a dignity and grace in his manner as a public speaker, that he was always listened to with profound attention. In short, there was a combination of excellences in him as a preacher, which are seldom found united, and which raised him to high distinction as a master in Israel.

'In his intercourse with the world, there was such a politeness in his manner, and such intelligence in his conversation, that it may be truly said he never mingled in society but to improve and adorn it. There was uniform respectability in his conduct, which could only result from the best principles of action. Wherever he was seen, whether in the largest meeting or in the most select party, you still beheld "the man of wisdom, the man of God." He never had a disguise to assume or to lay aside, but was always consistent, honourable, and ingenuous.

'In our ecclesiastical courts he was a most useful member. There his manner was characterized by exemplary gravity and patient attention; and such was his clear discernment of the merits of every cause, his unbiassed judgment, his zeal for what he felt to be wise and just, and his happy flow of powerful eloquence, that he had a great influence in directing

their measures, and was generally regarded as the best of their speakers. In the various improvements which have been made in our Church, he had a principal share. Eager as he was for these measures, he respected every upright opponent, and did everything, which wisdom and patience could suggest, to conciliate those who, under the influence of their passions and prejudices, resisted these advances to perfection.

'As a member of society, he was a zealous promoter of the public good. Schemes for this purpose were often suggested or improved by his wisdom, recommended by his eloquence, or carried into effect by his exertions. Such was his activity, that he was ready for every good work, and persevered in it through fatigue and opposition, which would have disgusted or dispirited others. Such were his decision and promptitude, that his plans were executed ere a step would have been taken by the tardy and hesitating; and so wise were his measures, that he always did what he wished to be done, in the best manner, and at the proper season. I need not add, that in these labours he was most disinterested, and that his time, talents, and efforts were generally devoted to objects which tended to benefit others, but which could yield no advantage to himself.'

Though a Seceding minister, Dr Husband stood high with the heritors and proprietors of the west of Fife. This was mainly owing to the wise and judicious scheme for the voluntary support of the poor, of which he was the author, and which, as long as he lived, kept off a legal assessment. Business connected with this scheme brought him into frequent intercourse with the wealthy men of the parish, several of whom had seceded with Ralph Erskine, and were members of his church. There was an annual sermon preached in Queen Anne Street Church on behalf of this scheme, and a grand occasion it was. Some distinguished stranger was brought to preach this sermon, and the heritors attended in

a body, to hear and to collect. The Earl of Elgin was sometimes present (father of the present Earl), and a friendly intercourse sprung up between them, which lasted till Dr Husband's death. I remember of hearing my grandfather telling, that on one occasion he and my father were invited to Broom Hall (the seat of the Elgin family), near Dunfermline; and as a motive to their consent, the Earl told them that the celebrated Mrs Siddons was on a visit to him, and was to give some readings of Shakespeare in the evening. It was a great temptation; but their religious principles, as well as Christian prudence, decided them to decline. It was necessary at that period for Christian ministers to lift up a testimony against theatrical entertainments; and though listening to the simple readings of the great *tragedienne* may not by some be considered as coming within that description of worldly amusements, there was a necessity for self-denial. Every pious reader of an 'autobiography' of a Church of Scotland clergyman (just published), must have been somewhat surprised with the references made in it to this very matter. It is there told that Mrs Siddons was playing in Edinburgh, during the sitting of the General Assembly in 1784, and that *important* business had to be suspended on the days she acted, because 'the younger members, clergy and laity, took their stations in the theatre in those days by three o'clock in the afternoon.'[1] We are also told that Drs Robertson and Blair, merely from deference to decorum, did not go, but that they visited her in *private*, and regretted, after she was away, that they did not go with the others and see her public performances. The Seceding ministers, though neither fanatics nor ascetics, fell upon the times in which these things were becoming a scandal, and it was therefore consistent with their witness-bearing character, altogether to discountenance even the appearances of evil.

Dr Lawson's correspondence with his Dunfermline friend was

[1] Autobiography of Dr Carlyle.

somewhat voluminous. Out of his many letters to my grandfather I select a few, simply to illustrate their mutual respect and confidence. In the first, the escape alluded to was this:—When the present spacious church in Queen Anne Street, Dunfermline, was building, and nearly completed, Dr Husband had one day ascended to the topmost scaffold. Just as he stepped off, the scaffolding suddenly gave way, and the mason who was on it was precipitated to the ground and killed: one moment later, and the minister too must have ended his days.

Dr Lawson to Dr Husband.

'SELKIRK, *Sept.* 1798.

'DEAR FRIEND,—It seems you have narrowly escaped seeing the realms of Proserpine, and the river Cocytus, and the possessions of the blessed. I heard of it only since the students came to this place, and was almost displeased with you that you had not informed me of your escape, that I might have rejoiced with you, and joined with you, though at a distance, in praising the God of our life, who has preserved you to us for some time longer; but I believe your thoughts were occupied by subjects of greater importance. Your feelings for the man who was a ransom, in some sense, for your life, and your devout exercises to your great Preserver, were sufficient to fill your mind. When Horace met with a like escape, he vowed oblations to Bacchus (if I remember right). The blind devotions of heathens are a reproach to many Christians. How strange is it, that we should, for one day, forget that our lives have been often exposed to extreme danger by disease or accident, and that God was our deliverer from so many deaths!

'I believe that, at this time (had you fallen in the day of danger), you would have been rejoicing in that event which delivered you from mortality, and sin, and contention; but your friends would long have mourned the loss of one whom

they loved so much, and from whom they expected much service in the cause of God. That you should abide in the flesh, was more needful for us, and will be, I hope, more profitable for you in the day when every man shall receive his reward according to his labours.

'What difference, through the course of this week, will there be between your employment and that of our late respected friend in Falkirk! A Synod even of Westminster divines is not a choir of angels; and yet, in such a Synod as our own, we have opportunities of doing service to Christ, which we will not enjoy in a better world. Our happiness lies in doing good to men, and in glorifying Christ.

'I am not without apprehensions of the event of this meeting of Synod. But let us leave it to God to govern the world, and to Christ to govern the Church as He pleases. Surely the wrath of man shall praise Him.

'I promised last year to give a day of my supply to each of the three congregations in the north, when I performed my last year's mission. I suppose that those whom I entrusted with the care of executing the business neglected it. I will beg of you to take care that it may be executed this year. You can speak of it to Mr Greig or Mr Peddie. I believe it will be proper to speak of it to Mr Hill, of Kelso, who will probably take the supply and perform the work.

'You may perhaps find in Mr Peddie's hand a little publication with my name. I hope you and Mrs Greig will use the freedom of a friend, by taking some copies for your children, to whom it may be of some little use. Mrs Fletcher was the remote cause of the publication. If you could send her two copies by the hand of her husband, it will save me the trouble of sending them by another conveyance. Perhaps Mrs Macfarlane and Mrs Brown may be willing to accept copies of it.—I am, ever yours, 'G. LAWSON.'

The two following letters were written upon the occasion

of the deaths of Mrs Husband, and of their son, Captain William Husband, who died when with his regiment at Ceylon. The third letter is of general importance, and the fourth refers to the degree of D.D. which had been conferred on his Dunfermline brother.

Dr Lawson to Dr Husband.

'SELKIRK, *August* 1, 1812.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—This evening I received your son's letter, announcing the calamity which God has been pleased to appoint for your trial, in the removal from this world of my highly-valued friend. It is not long since I received a letter, announcing the departure of my reverend friend, Mr Johnston, of Ecclefechan, whose name will long be remembered with honour.

'I make no doubt that they have both met together in a state of happiness, the consideration of which ought more than to counterbalance our sorrow. We may, and ought to mourn, when God afflicts us; but we ought greatly to rejoice that He has provided us so rich consolations.

'The evangelists make no less honourable mention of the good services of the pious Galilean women to Jesus, than of the continuance of the apostles with Him in His temptations. The mild and unassuming virtues of our late sister, and every office of love performed to men under the influence of the religious principle, which I am persuaded regulated her conduct, will be found recorded in God's book of remembrance, as well as the official exertions of our venerable fathers now with Christ. I think it must give you some pleasure to consider, that her constant care and her many offices of love for promoting your comfort, are now receiving a reward richer than your gratitude and love could ever render (Eph. vi.).

'Often have her ailments excited sorrow in your mind; and if anything in your power could have given her perfect health, you would have been happy. But now, you will view

things with somewhat different eyes; for you must be persuaded that these troubles which she suffered have contributed to her present felicities, and that there is no comparison between the pain and anxiety felt by herself, or by you and her other friends on her account, and those rewards of her patience which she now enjoys. All God's paths towards us are mercy and truth; and these as much others of which we are most tempted to complain.

'When you kindly proposed, two harvests ago, to make me a visit, I consoled myself under the disappointment, in the hope that you would still consider the promise as binding to performance at a more convenient season. I still indulge the hope. But I am less sanguine about the time. I know that, at least, I enjoy your friendship and your prayers.

'I thank your son for the kind manner in which he has communicated to me the afflicting intelligence. I see he will observe that important maxim of Solomon, "Thine own and thy father's friend forsake not." The good impression, which I hope will be made upon your sons abroad, as well as your children at home, by the loss of their amiable mother, is one of many considerations which will assist your endeavours to resign yourselves to the will of your heavenly Father.

'My wife, my daughter Nancy, who experienced, and still gratefully remembers Mrs Husband's hospitality; and the other members of my family who are at home, sympathize with your afflictions, and desire to be remembered by yours.

'The Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, be with you, and with your children and colleague.—I am, ever yours, 'G. LAWSON.'

Dr Lawson to Dr Husband.

'SELKIRK, *Sept.* 1813.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—You will not doubt that I cordially sympathized with you, when God was pleased to afflict you with sorrow upon sorrow, by calling out of the world the

son, nearly at the same time with the mother. You have been much favoured by Divine Providence; but you have also endured heavy afflictions. No doubt, one of the designs of it is, to give you an opportunity of teaching your hearers by your practice, what you must have often taught them by your mouth,—the duty of patience in tribulation. I believe few are better fitted than you are for this service to God, and to your fellow-men. Yet you need grace; and I doubt not that it will be bestowed on you.

'It gave me some pleasure, on your son's account, as well as for higher reasons, that so much of a religious spirit appeared in the Governor of Ceylon, and in many under his command. I hoped that your son would be none of the last to discover his love to the religion in which you had educated him, by contributing his endeavours to make it known in the island.

'You once gave me a promise of seeing me again in the harvest. Since you was last with me, I have looked forward with some degree of hope to the completion of it. I was a little disappointed that I have neither seen you nor heard from you for a long time past (except by a short and hasty missive). But I trust as firmly as ever to your friendship, which, I believe, will be immortal in the highest sense.

'I am sure you will not overlook the rich consolations that God affords you in His providence, as well as in His word. How unlike is your condition to that of Job, who often thought with bitterness of spirit of the time when his children were yet about him! He had some words of God for his consolation; and he esteemed them more than his necessary food. But he had not the last discourses of our Lord to his sorrowful disciples, nor any of our Scriptures. David did not possess that portion of the Scripture which furnishes us with the richest cordials; yet that portion which he had, furnished him with sweet songs in the dreariest steps of his pilgrimage.—I am, yours affectionately, 'G. LAWSON.'

Dr Lawson to Dr Husband.

'SELKIRK, *May* 18, 1814.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—I ought to have sent you my thanks before this time for your kind and seasonable letter, which was of no small use to my wife and daughters, as well as to me. I have now to thank you, besides, for your kind offer, without solicitation, to give us your company and assistance at the dispensation of the Lord's Supper on the second Sabbath of June. We may perhaps not enjoy such a degree of social pleasure at our meeting as we have sometimes felt in former days. But the joys of the Lord are chiefly to be desired at our religious solemnities. And if we are animated by David's spirit, we will look forward to them with delight. These joys comprehend the sweetest social pleasures that were ever tasted on earth. All the pleasures of Paul in the fellowship of his brethren were joys in the Lord, and I know not whether any man on earth ever tasted greater pleasure in converse with his friends.

Mr Leckie, I expect, will be your colleague; and on Monday I hope to have some of the brethren with us at dinner, as we have a meeting of Presbytery on Tuesday. It will be your prayer, as well as mine, that we may all enjoy fellowship with Him who is by far the best, and, I hope, the most beloved of our friends.

Patriotism and philanthropy ought at present to raise our spirits above our private concerns. What incalculable misery is prevented, what precious blessings may be expected to the nations of the world from the revolution in France, if God is not provoked by the sins of ungrateful men to disappoint our fairest hopes. Do you not think that Habakkuk's prophecies, ch. ii. 5–13, are verified in the character, behaviour, and fall of Bonaparte? May we not hope that the verification of verse 14 is at least approaching?

'It gives me far more pleasure to have the prospect of

seeing you here, than it would have done to have obtained from the Synod what I wished. I thank God my dulness of hearing does not entirely unfit me for converse with a single friend, although I can take scarcely any part in mixed society. Seeing the face of such a dear friend will in a good measure compensate the deficiency of my hearing.

'But let us be thankful for the many pleasures we have enjoyed through our organs of sensation in times past, and trust God, for the time to come, that He will grant us what He sees to be good, though not everything that we wish. It would ill become ministers, or any followers of Christ, to feel reluctance in saying, Not my will, but Thine be done.—I am, ever yours, 'G. LAWSON.'

Dr Lawson to Dr Husband.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—I congratulate you on your association with so many of your brethren in the privilege of having D.D. affixed to your name. Your friends will not value you the more for it, but they will be very well pleased that the University of Aberdeen has been pleased to confer it on one so well deserving it. We must not be ambitious of titles; but I hope we are teachers of the way of God in truth, and that our instructions are beneficial to many.

'The title may give us pleasure on another account. The time has been when the ministers and professors of universities would have rather contributed their endeavours to procure the gallows for ministers of a Dissenting body, than conferred upon them the distinctions which they claimed for themselves and their brethren. I am afraid our piety is colder than that of many of our fathers; but our humanity, I think, is more abundant.

'I have now parted with my pupils, some of whom, it is probable, I will never more see in this world. But I have been long habituated to separations of this kind from young men to whom I had formed that attachment which it is natural

to form towards those who are in some sense our children, especially to such of them as are distinguished for their amiable or respectable qualities. How pleasant would the prospect of our departure from this world be, if our hope were as lively as that of the first Christians was! While we continue in this world, we must be for ever separated from many that were justly dear to us, and can but seldom see other friends still in the same world with us. A few years ago I never parted with my friends in Fife without the hope of seeing them again within a few months. My hope now is reduced to that of hearing from them, yet I doubt not of their still retaining for me that warm regard with which they honoured me from my early years.

'There is one thing I find which cuts off from me the pleasure of hearing so frequently as I once did from my best friends in Fife. Your district does not now afford me almost any pupils. But I hope that the ministry of the Gospel will still continue among you, and in other places of our land, till time shall be no more.—I am, yours ever,

'G. Lawson.'

The Rev. James Macfarlane was for nearly forty years the colleague of Dr Husband in Dunfermline. I have often heard him say, that during all that time not one jarring word had ever passed between them. His having married Dr Husband's daughter, no doubt contributed to this happy, though rather unusual, state of things. Dr Lawson was ever a welcome visitant at our house, as I have heard. For many years he used to come for a few weeks to Dunfermline to see his friends, but especially to enjoy the benefit of sea-bathing at Limekilns, in the neighbourhood. My father and grandfather took great pleasure in accompanying him, on these occasions, on visits to Lochgelly, Lethangie, Inverkeithing, and Limekilns, that, with the venerable men, Greig, Brown, and Haddin, who laboured in the ministry there, he might

hold sweet intercourse. Mr Macfarlane died in 1823, about three years after Dr Lawson. The following sketch of his character is valuable, as one of few relics in print of the venerable David Greig, who preached the funeral sermon :—

'It will perhaps be expected that, on the present occasion, I should give you a short sketch of the character of your lately deceased minister; and this I can do with the greater pleasure, as there is scarcely anything in it but what was of an amiable and commendable nature. He was endowed with kind and amiable natural dispositions, which, under the influence of Divine grace, strongly inclined him to benevolence, and to take pleasure in the happiness of his relatives, friends, connections, and indeed of all with whom he had intercourse. He was, as might be expected from his being so constituted, a kind husband, an affectionate parent, and a steady friend. His heart was formed for friendship, and few men felt this amiable disposition in such a degree of warmth as he felt it, or were so ready to give such proofs of a sincere and disinterested attachment. He was a warm and beneficent friend of the poor, affording them his pecuniary assistance, according to his power, and sometimes beyond it, and employing his influence with others to minister to their necessities. He was compassionately alive to the case of the afflicted, the widow, and the fatherless, frequently visiting them in their distress, and feelingly administering to them the instructions and consolations of religion. Probity, integrity, and uprightness, were often remarked by those who had the happiness of being acquainted with him, as being prominent features in his character; and it might with justice be said of him, that "*he was a downright honest man.*" His personal religion, which forms the brightest jewel in every human character, was conspicuous in the various relations of life, and the different situations in which the providence of God had placed him. His early days were distinguished by sobriety and decency of conduct, by seriousness and devotedness to God and religion.

His natural talents, sanctified by Divine grace, and improved by a literary education, eminently qualified him for being a minister of the Gospel; and this office he discharged in our Church, and among you, for upwards of thirty-eight years, with no common degree of application, fidelity, and usefulness. From the time he commenced his ministry, he appeared to have adopted the determination of the apostle of the Gentiles, "to know nothing among his people but Jesus Christ and Him crucified." The peculiar doctrines of the Gospel were his delightful theme, on which he expatiated with a melting eloquence and a visible pleasure, and satisfaction to himself and his hearers. His statements of these doctrines were luminous and interesting, calculated to convey to others the strong and affecting conceptions of them which he had formed in his own mind. His manner of delivering his sentiments from the pulpit was reckoned by the most competent judges to be among the best of his fellow-ministers, grave, dignified, calculated to command attention, and to do justice to the ideas which he brought forward in his discourses. If his hearers were not edified, it was not because the pure and unadulterated truths of the Gospel were not brought before their minds, and pressed home upon their hearts and consciences, but because they had contracted a vitiated taste, and their distempered souls, like the Israelites in the wilderness, loathed the heavenly manna. The piety and devotional feelings of your minister, which were conspicuous throughout his life, shone forth at the close of it with a bright and edifying lustre, like the sun when he is seen going down with a blaze of light and glory. His affliction, which was often severe, was borne with exemplary patience and submission to the will of God, through faith in God and the hope of a blessed immortality. Trusting in God as the Father of the fatherless, his mind, for some weeks before his death, was disencumbered of cares about the future condition in the world of a numerous young family, not amply provided for,—cares which, to his delicate

feelings, must have otherwise been most oppressive and overwhelming. In the views of the great and all-important solemnities of death, judgment, and eternity, which he perceived to be at hand, and contemplated in the full vigour of his mind, he was composed and tranquil, longing to be released, at the same time waiting with resignation the hour of his departure. It was evident, and indeed declared by him in many pleasant expressions, of which I myself and many others were witnesses, that he had anchored his soul on Christ and His all-perfect atonement and righteousness,—that one foundation laid in the Gospel for the faith and hope of the guilty, and which you have so often heard recommended to you in the course of his ministry. This faith and this hope, which he often expressed, were accompanied with the most humiliating views of his own unworthiness and sinfulness in the sight of God,—views which are always the concomitants of the true faith of the Gospel. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace."'

The following letters were written upon the occasion of Mrs Macfarlane's death:—

Mr Macfarlane to Dr Lawson.

DUNFERMLINE, *May* 16, 1816.

'MY DEAR SIR,—Perhaps with no less propriety than Jeremiah, I may say, "I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of His wrath." Within these two or three days I have been looking around me, and inquiring, Who are my friends that are most likely to sympathize with me under my present sorrows? You presented yourself to my mind among the first. You have not only a feeling heart, but you have, besides, experience of the affliction which at this moment wrings my soul, and almost overwhelms my poor heart. I think I hear you say, To what is all this the preface? Why, my dear sir, I have to inform you that my wife, my best, my dearest earthly treasure, was, in the righteous, holy, and wise

providence of God, taken away from me on Monday night, at twenty minutes past ten o'clock. On the Tuesday preceding she was safely delivered of a son. For two days she was, to our view, doing well; but on the Friday some dangerous symptoms appeared. It was judged necessary to send an express to Edinburgh for medical aid. This was obtained. But all was ineffectual; for on the Saturday she became so ill, that we were all collected about her bed to witness, as we feared, the awful separation between her soul and her body. To the wonder, however, of all present, about seven o'clock she revived considerably, and continued better all that night and all Sabbath. Our hopes were not a little elated, for even a small thing elated them. But on Monday morning a sad, sad reverse took place. From that time she gradually grew worse and worse, till at the time above mentioned she, I trust, fell asleep in Jesus. This, my dear sir, is a sore affliction for me—the sorest beyond comparison that ever befell me. She was to me everything that a husband could wish for in a partner of life. She was so harmless, so inoffensive, so modest, so prudent, and so eminently pious, you would almost have suspected whether she belonged to the number of Adam's fallen race. O what a treasure have I lost,—a treasure which, to me, was of more value than all the world besides! Surely I must be a great, a grievous sinner, that required so heavy a stroke to correct me. My rebellious heart is apt to rise in opposition to the Almighty. Pray for me; O pray for me, that I may not be left to offend God. He knows that I *desire* not to offend Him, and yet I am afraid that my *conduct* and my *desires* are not consistent. My mind is somehow unsettled. I never felt my own weakness so much in anything. Everything within and without me is dreary. She has left me eight children, seven sons and one daughter, one of the sons only ten days old. Oh! poor motherless infant. This is a situation peculiarly affecting. I should not envy the heart that could not feel an interest in it. I am fully

persuaded you do. When, then, your heart is at any time warmed in the enjoyment of fellowship with the God of salvation, O do not forget to request something for me—for poor bereaved, I had almost said tortured me—better than this world can either give or take away.

'But I must tell you, my dear sir, that she died resting her hope of salvation on the sure foundation which God hath laid in Zion. She, indeed, died in triumph. In this I should rejoice—and, I hope, do rejoice—that she hath gone to the Father. But my fond heart says this might have been the case though she had been spared with me a while longer. I used to console myself with the idea that she should close my eyes. But this is now impossible. May be her spirit may be present, and witness this done by some other. O what a relief would it be to my mind, were the God of heaven but to permit her immortal spirit to meet with me for a few moments, and give me some information respecting the state of things in the eternal world of which I would wish to be informed. I think *her* spirit would not affright me; of one thing I am certain, it would not injure me. O no; it would labour to console me, as it had frequently done while it enlivened her body, amid the little adversities that befell us when together. Methinks I hear you say, What foolish raving! Write me soon, my dear sir, and tell me whether I be really raving. Criticise me, but O do it not severely.—My dear sir, yours, with esteem and affection, 'JAMES MACFARLANE.'

Dr Lawson to Mr Macfarlane.[1]

'SELKIRK, *May* 18, 1816.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—What shall I say to ease your afflicted mind? All your friends sympathize most tenderly with you. The best of all friends is afflicted in your afflictions, although I am afraid he is not pleased with the overflowings of your

[1] This letter has already appeared in the author's work, 'The Night Lamp.'

grief. You have not been able to observe so well as you wish, the gracious precept enforced by the gracious doctrine which you find in 1 Thess. iv. 14–18, and John xiv. 15, 16.

'I am not surprised that you think you could support the sight and converse of one so deservedly dear to you. But think again. Would she not intermingle her words of tenderness with reproofs too wounding to your spirit? Might she not speak to this effect: "Why do you weep so sore for an event that crowns my happiness? Have you not often told me that you loved me as you love yourself? and yet you cannot but know that my gain ten thousand times exceeds your loss. I loved you dearly, but I loved Christ better; and do you mourn like one that can find no comfort, because I am now with Him in paradise? The chief attraction of my love to you was your love to my Lord. But are you not now showing that you bestowed too large a portion of your love upon your wife, and need to be put in mind, by Divine Providence, of the necessity of guarding your heart against the common evil of giving too large a proportion of your affections to a creature of the dust? I have lost my life in bringing one of your children into the world. But does not the gain immensely exceed the loss? It is a great addition to my happiness in being with Christ, to have the hope that the dear creatures, whom I was the means of bringing into existence, are one day to be with me, to behold the beauty of my Saviour and theirs. Even that stroke which separated me from them will contribute to the happy event. They will not bear the thought of being for ever separated from their beloved mother. They will love that Saviour who so graciously received her to be with Himself in paradise. I doubt not that the event which you deplore so bitterly will bring advantages to yourself far overbalancing the pain. It will excite your ardour in running the race set before you. It is one of the events that work together for promoting your progress towards that better country where I now dwell, and

from which you would not be so unkind as to bring me back, were it in your power."

'There were many years between the time when Joseph was lost to his father, and the time when he again set his eyes on him. Yet the meeting was a good recompense for his years of sorrow. How much richer will be the recompense of your griefs, when you again meet with your beloved partner, to dwell with her, not a few years, but for ever! Perhaps the distressing thought may suggest itself to you, What if I should never be admitted to the pleasant land into which nothing that defiles can enter. But the same grace that was sufficient for our departed friends is sufficient for us also.

'You will not think that the loss of your earthly treasure gives you any reason to call in question the loving-kindness of our Redeemer. We have reason to think that He did not preserve His own mother from the affliction of widowhood; yet she never said, "He saves others from such cruel affliction; why was He so unkind to me?"

'One of the best ways of preserving our minds from being harassed by unquiet thoughts, is to employ them on useful subjects. These the Scriptures will supply to you in great plenty. The Christian will not perish in the day of his affliction; for the law of God is his delight. I reckon it a pleasure and advantage frequently to commit small portions of Scripture, in the original, to my memory. Blessed will we be amidst all that we suffer in this world, if we can meditate day and night in the law of the Lord.

'I feel much for my dear friend, Mr Husband; but I know that he will seek his consolation from the source where it will most easily be found. When he compares the dealings of God towards his own family with his dealings towards those of some of his brethren, he may be tempted to think with you, that he is the man who hath seen affliction. But it will soon occur to him, that others have had as much reason to

mourn as he, and that none of us have such heavy burdens to bear, of the kind, as Jacob and David. My best compliments to him and to all your friends. May God enable them to bear their share in the affliction, as Christians ought to do. Those things are best for us that will be found best in another world.

'You will, probably, put your children that are reading, in mind of some passages of Scripture that are likely, in present circumstances, to make a happy impression upon them, as Psalm xxvii. 10; 2 Tim. i. 5; Prov. iv. 3–9. I believe the instructions that our departed sister gave, and would have given, to her children, were such in effect as Solomon received from his mother and his father.

'May God spare them to you, and grant them all grace to walk in the steps of their mother and grandmother, that they may not be for ever separated from them. And may you for ever enjoy those consolations which the lapse of time cannot take away.—I am, ever your affectionate friend,

'GEO. LAWSON.'

Dr Lawson to Dr Husband.

SELKIRK, *July* 1816.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—I need not say how sincerely I condole with you under the severe affliction with which God has been pleased to visit you. I doubt not but you will often, through what remains of life, mourn the loss of one so justly dear to you, and whose amiable virtues endear her memory to all that knew her. I can the more readily sympathize with you at present, as I have reason to fear that a similar calamity is to be apprehended in our own family. My youngest daughter is at present with her brother in England, to which the physicians ordered her to be sent for the recovery of her health; but she has become so much worse, that we have very little hope of seeing her again in the land of the living. I know I will have the benefit of your prayers

on behalf of my dear child. I humbly hope that if it shall please God to take her from us, He will receive her to Himself; so that, should our earnest supplications for our beloved child be denied in this world, she may receive, through infinite mercy, a length of days for ever and ever in the heavenly world. I can enter into your feelings at the moment of your bereavement. You will probably be displeased with yourself that you were not more disposed to be thankful to God for giving you such a daughter, adorned with so many conciliating qualities. We never know the value of our blessings till we lose them, or fear the loss of them. But we may learn from such feelings to turn our thoughts to the blessings which we still possess, and consider what we might think of them also, if we were bereaved of them. If Job blessed God, who had given, and who had taken away his ten children, what reason have you and I to bless Him for taking away only a part of what He gave, and for leaving us others to supply their place! I believe we are too ready to think, when any of our children are taken from us, that we have lost those who deserved to be the dearest of them; but if they had been spared, and others taken from us, the same thought might have disquieted us. Our surviving children have this motive, which may be improved by the remembrance of their beloved sisters; and I believe that your remaining children, as well as my own, will do all in their power to alleviate our painful remembrances. May God spare them to be the comfort of our declining years, and prepare them for a part in that inheritance which is now possessed by such of their relations as have died in the Lord! I hope our friend, Mr Macfarlane, has recovered from his depression of spirits. He is left with a heavy charge, but this charge ought rather to be accounted a pleasure than a burden; so, I am sure, he will think of it, and bless God that, when his dearest relation is removed from him, so many very dear to him are still left, who, I hope, will be long spared for a blessing and comfort to him.

'You have, I suppose, seen Mr Brown's (of Biggar) excellent sermon on the death of his amiable consort. I durst not now trust myself on such an occasion with such a subject; but I could venture on it at his time of life.—I am, yours sincerely, 'GEORGE LAWSON.'

Dr Husband to Dr Lawson.

DUNFERMLINE, *August* 21, 1816.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your last letter led me to anticipate the afflicting event which I now learn by the public papers has taken place. I had learnt some time before that it was likely soon to take place, and desired to take a part in these painful anticipations which I knew you and Mrs Lawson must have felt. Indeed, I should be very hard-hearted and very ungrateful if I did not feel along with you. My own heart still bleeds under the painful stroke with which we have been visited, and under which your excellent letters contributed not a little to our support and consolation.

'The admonitory and consoling address which you put into the mouth of our dear departed friend, we read with much interest, and I trust the effects have been beneficial and will be lasting. May those strong consolations which you administer to others be your own portion! We have now less to bind us to earth, and stronger inducements to raise our hearts and desires to heaven than before. Is it enthusiasm when I feel a kind of pleasure in the idea that my beloved daughter acts the part of a guardian angel, and, while she beholds the face of her Father in heaven, looks down with compassion on the friends she has left behind, who were so dear to her, and to whom she was so deservedly dear. But it is proper to derive our consolation from that sure word of prophecy, which leaves us no room to doubt the sympathy of our merciful High Priest, or His constant love of us in our temptations.

'There is something very affecting in the thought, that

those to whom we were fondly attached are gone, and that we shall no more see them in the land of the living. But, though they are gone, they have not *perished*. There is something peculiarly tender in our Saviour's address when He went into the house of Jairus, at that time the house of mourning, "Why do ye make this ado, and weep? The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." May not this be applied to our dear departed friends? They are not dead, they are only asleep: they sleep in Jesus, and the period is not far distant when they shall awake with songs of everlasting joy on their heads. Blessed memory, when friends shall meet never to separate, but to enjoy God and one another through endless duration.

'Mr Macfarlane enjoys pretty good health, though afflicted with dulness of hearing. All the children are well. He went on Monday last to Dunblane, where he is to remain a week or two for the benefit of the mineral waters. Mr Gilfillan's company, too, will be a cordial to his mind. I was much disappointed yesterday at missing the sight of two gentlemen in whom, I believe, you take an interest—Dr Anderson and Mr Paterson. They called when I happened to be attending our Bible Society. When I came home I set out in search of them, but without success.—I remain, my much respected friend, yours most cordially, 'JAMES HUSBAND.'

WILLIAM KIDSTON, D.D., was an especial favourite of the Selkirk divine. As the son of the minister of Stow, one of Dr Lawson's nearest neighbours and intimate friends, he was much beloved. From boyhood he took a warm interest in his studies, admitted him into his confidence, and favoured him with his choicest counsels. When Mr Kidston was licensed, he was the popular preacher of his year, and speedily received calls to Hawick, Lanark, and Kennoway in Fife. Competing calls at that time were decided by the Synod, and accordingly, by its decision, he was appointed to Kennoway.

This was a disappointment,—he would have preferred either of the other two, but had to submit to the decision of his ecclesiastical superiors. Previous to his ordination, he received another call from Glasgow, which was set aside by the Synod, on the ground that the deed as to Kennoway must be first carried into effect. This tended to increase his aversion to Kennoway; and, it seems, he had allowed himself to speak somewhat disrespectfully of the Synod on account of its decisions in his case, besides taking some undue liberties with the Presbytery of Dunfermline in the arrangements necessary to his ordination. As helping to inform us of the rather severe views of our fathers in such cases, we give an extract from a letter to Dr Lawson by Dr Husband, of Dunfermline.

'27*th March* 1790.—You are much interested in the welfare of Mr Kidston. I am not much acquainted with the young man. I see him, however, to be a lad of parts, and make no doubt, from what you say of him, that, on account of his other qualifications, he is well worthy of esteem and regard; and no person whom you love can be indifferent to me. I am not one of the most zealous for the interposition of ecclesiastical authority in the last issue with regard to recusant probationers. At the same time, I am not able to approve of Mr Kidston's conduct. The congregation of Kennoway is a respectable one in number, circumstances, and character, and the call is unanimous. It appears to me, therefore, to be his duty to embrace it. His antipathy is unaccountable, except, perhaps, on the supposition of more flattering prospects. His father, indeed, in a letter which I received from him some time ago, insinuates that the mode of conducting matters in our Presbytery (if I understand him right) is with him an objection to union with us; for he talks of the opportunity of reasoning and the power of influencing determinations being usurped by a few, and says, that no man is obliged to enter himself a cypher to such a number. At the same time, he talks of being perhaps obliged to bring out

these matters more publicly. If Mr Kidston meant to influence me to use my endeavours for extricating his son from his present circumstances, I cannot think him the very wisest politician, for the tendency of his language is quite in the opposite direction. At the same time, I hope I am able to resist the temptation he has unwittingly thrown in my way, and that I shall behave in the affair of his son as if no such thing had happened. . . . After several Presbyteries, and many arguments, Mr Kidston delivered the last part of his public trials, together with his exegesis at Kincardine on the 16th inst. The Presbytery were dealing with him to deliver his private trials, when he declined, in a representation and petition, for the purpose of being transmitted to the Synod, which he alleged contained his reasons why he could not proceed further in the business. When the paper was read, it was found to reflect in pretty severe terms on the Synod, the Presbytery, and the congregation of Kennoway. . . . After some conversation, he petitioned to be allowed to withdraw it. . . . His request was granted, with a caution from the chair to take heed to his future conduct. The Presbytery then proposed to take the rest of his trials, when he refused to proceed further, alleging as his reason, that he was determined not to submit to ordination in Kennoway. Upon this the Presbytery referred it to the Synod, to judge of his conduct. How the affair may go at the Synod I will not pretend to say; but I know that there is a considerable zeal among several of the members to enforce a late determination respecting probationers. For my own part, I see difficulties on both sides of that determination. How the matter may strike me a month hence I cannot say. I have much respect for your opinion, and should we happen in any instance to differ, I have no doubt of our always loving as brethren and as friends. I know you would cast me out of your regard if it were not my motto, "Amicus Plato," etc., "sed magis amica veritas."

To this letter Dr Lawson sent the following reply:—

'SELKIRK, *June* 1790.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am sorry that I will be obliged to disappoint you of the assistance you expected from me at your ensuing communion, as it interferes with that of Newtown congregation, where I must be, either in person, or by a substitute capable of doing my work. This is now the second time that you and I have been disappointed in this way. But we have reason to be thankful that nothing worse has happened between us. Our friendship is the same that it was twenty-three years ago.

'We have spent twenty-three years in the reciprocation of the warmest affection. From the calculation of chances for life, it does not appear probable that both of us have as much time before us, as we have enjoyed the pleasure of knowing that we were most sincerely beloved by one another. But by the Scriptures we are authorized humbly to hope that we shall spend a never-ceasing duration of friendship, unembittered and unalloyed by distance, or by any of the accidents that in this world diminish the sweetest pleasures of life. God is no less gracious than wise in mingling the best of our earthly enjoyments with a mixture of disagreeable ingredients. If I could enjoy your company as often as I wish, I would probably think less frequently than I do of another world; and yet, as things stand, my thoughts of it are but few and cold.

'I formed a plan for being in Edinburgh next week, and seeing you the week after. I anticipate much pleasure in seeing you. God realizes or disappoints our prospects, according to His own good pleasure. I have seen Mr William Kidston, whose aversion to Kennoway is not yet removed, though I hope he will be obedient to the sentence of Synod, if his obedience be insisted on by you and the congregation. I confess that I entertain no sanguine hopes of seeing comfortable effects from that settlement, unless his own mind should receive a more favourable disposition towards it.

Without mutual affection, ministers and people cannot be happy. What is worse, they cannot, I think, be holy in the exercise of reciprocal duties.

'If all things be not done with charity, they are not done according to the mind of Christ.

'I should be glad to know with certainty that the people of Kennoway entertain no ill-will to Mr Kidston. I have not heard that they do; but they are children of Adam, and they are not fully purified from the indignant passions which produce coldness and aversion towards those who seem to entertain the same dispositions on the other side.

'You will scarcely find any man that would entertain more respect and esteem for another than I would entertain for you, although I did not know you to be my friend. But all this esteem would be insufficient to produce in me those warm sentiments of friendship for you which possess my soul, if I had reason to think that you entertained an aversion to me. I believe I have a greater degree of pride than most men, but I am sure that other men have some share of pride; and, if they had none at all, I do not see that a sincere friendship could subsist on one side only. Since I entered upon this epistle, I have been favoured with a short visit from Mr Kidston, junior, who designed to write you in order to apologize for not appearing before your Presbytery next week. I told him I would, to save him the postage, insert his apology in this letter. He finds himself under the necessity of assisting next Lord's day at his father's, who is disappointed in his hope of being served by a neighbouring brother. If it had been practicable to attend you without disobliging his father, by denying him that assistance which he needs, he would have done it.

'He hopes there will be a meeting of Presbytery, at your communion, when, if God will, he will be present himself. I know your sentiments about his affair are very different from mine, and I know, too, that in almost everything else

you are a great deal wiser than I am. But I cannot help thinking that, in the present business, your good sense will in some future part of your life oblige you to change your sentiments.

'However our opinions may differ in regard to this or anything else, nothing, I hope, will ever change our friendship for one another, which is the pride and pleasure of my life.—Yours, etc., 'G. LAWSON.'

In another letter from Dr Husband, of date 17th August 1790, we have the finale of this interesting matter:—'Mr Kidston's ordination is appointed to take place on Wednesday first. I am not yet fully determined whether I shall attend. Though I am not fully satisfied of the propriety of the Synod's sentence, after such determined opposition, yet with Mr Kidston's ready consent I could concur in the ordination.'

Mr Kidston was, after all, ordained in Kennoway, where he remained only about a year. A second call came to him from Glasgow. He left the decision in the hands of the Synod, and by the Synod he was translated to Glasgow, where he lived and laboured with great acceptance for upwards of sixty years. In adverting to the subject of the Kennoway incumbency, he thus expresses himself in a letter to a friend:—'I was averse to submitting to ordination in Kennoway, and would have preferred either of the other congregations, Hawick or Lanark, and often spoke unadvisedly on this subject. During the short time of my connection with Kennoway, I enjoyed much comfort; my pastoral labours were kindly received, and seemed to be not unprofitable. My separation from them occasioned feelings more painful, by much, than I had anticipated.' The introduction of this matter into these pages is justifiable, though it were for no other reason than to present the contrast between Dr Kidston's earlier and more matured convictions. The law in

such cases as his is altered, and the decision in competing and translating calls is now left, by the Synod, in the hands of the parties themselves. It might have been expected that to this alteration Dr Kidston would have been a consenting judge, but it was not so; he voted against the change, and often afterwards regretted that the Synod had made it. All his ministerial life, indeed, belied the promise of his outset. No man ever had a more profound respect for church authorities, or could pay more conscientious and honourable regard to the 'laws of the house,' or the counsels and views of his brethren. In this, as in other respects, he was a model minister. Dr Lawson witnessed his settlement in Glasgow with great satisfaction, and as long as he lived manifested towards him the most affectionate regard. Not long after that settlement, we find the Professor thus writing to his pupil:—

'SELKIRK, *Sept.* 1794.

'DEAR WILLIAM,—I hope you will excuse me when I tell you that I wish to keep some time longer both your books in my hands: M'Laurin's, because I have neglected to read a considerable part of it; and the book on the Song, because I have in great measure forgot it.

'I am glad to hear of the acceptance of your labours in Glasgow. I hope you will go on from strength to strength, and that your labours will not be in vain in the Lord. I trust you have often reflected on the necessity of diligence, and of an humble dependence on Christ. "Labor improbus omnia vincit," says Virgil; but a writer of far higher authority says, "Meditate on these things; give thyself wholly to them: for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself, and those that hear thee."—I am, yours affectionately,

'GEO. LAWSON.'

When Dr Kidston's health gave way, in the year 1820, he

received the following precious epistle from his sympathizing friend :—

Dr Lawson to Dr Kidston.

'DEAR BROTHER,—I am very sorry to hear that you still continue under the rod of God; but I rejoice, at the same time, to hear that, when you are disabled to preach from your pulpit, you are enabled to preach submission to the will of God by your patient behaviour. I doubt not that, in another world, you will look back with joy on all your present sufferings, as I hope you at present look forward with pleasure to that state in which we will view many things in a very different light from what we do at present.

'I believe the Bible is now more pleasant to you than in former times, when you were accustomed to study it with care, and expound it to your hearers. You will, at least, find such pleasure as you could not formerly enjoy, in those many portions of it which were written for the consolation of the afflicted. How uncomfortable would your present condition be, if you had never known of the Psalms, or, at least, if you had not been instructed in these abundant springs of consolation of which the Psalms give us such affecting views! You cannot be unhappy whilst deep is calling unto deep, when you are taught of God to say, "Yet the Lord will command His loving-kindness in the day, and in the night His songs shall be with me, and my prayer to the God of my life."

'When you think of the uncertainty of the termination of your trouble, you will not be able, without some anxiety, to think of these little ones that you must leave behind you, if your sickness should bring you to the house appointed for all living. Although you have better prospects of a comfortable provision for them than most of your brethren, you will probably feel a deep solicitude in the case of leaving them in a state of childhood, exposed to all the temptations of the

world, without the advantages of a father's superintending eye. But many of our troubles are superfluous, and those most of all which respect futurity. We know not what shall be on the morrow; but this we know, that many who are now in health will die this year, and that many who are now looking out daily for the message of departure, will be preserved alive for years to come. Besides, we have a gracious Father, to whom we can cheerfully commit the beloved fruit of our bodies. "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive." Some critics would deprive us of the comfort of this pleasant text, by giving a very different, and even opposite translation; but if, by an interrogation, we should turn it into a threatening, we have abundance of other texts encouraging us to trust in God as the God of our seed. If God publishes a threatening against the enemies of His people, may not His people look for the blessing which is the reverse of it? Zaccheus, and the woman bound down with a spirit of infirmity, were graciously regarded by Christ as children of Abraham.—I remain, yours sincerely,

'GEORGE LAWSON.'

Dr Lawson, during a great portion of his life, was surrounded by brethren worthy of his friendship. We can do little more than mention the names of a few of them. The Rev. Dr Waugh, of Newtown (before he went to London); Mr Coventry, of Stitchel; Mr Kidston, of Stow; Mr Shanks, of Jedburgh; Mr Hall, of Kelso; Mr Henderson, of Hawick; Dr Henderson, of Galashiels; and others, were his most intimate associates and assistants, and of them all, while he lived, he spake in the warmest terms. An anecdote is told of one of these—Mr Shanks—well worthy of a place in this reminiscence of these days. When disaffection to Government was abroad, this most eloquent preacher stood forward to teach the loyalty of the Bible; and when the Secession was attacked by its enemies, and accused of being unfriendly to

the Government of the day, he published a pamphlet, not only in defence of his Church, but of that Government itself. This publication was highly useful. It reached a Cabinet Minister, and the result was a laudatory communication from Downing Street to Jedburgh, with the offer of a pension to the author. Mr Shanks' reply was brief but pithy, and deserves to be preserved: 'My Lord, I am a Seceder from conviction, a loyalist from preference, and a patriot from principle. I can accept of no pension.' But the *P.S.* to this reply is the best of it: 'My neighbour, the Rev. Mr ——, who is minister of the parish of ——, has a large family, and a small stipend; and I shall feel obliged by your giving the pension to him.' The favour was granted, and the family referred to enjoyed the pension, at least during their father's lifetime.

Dr Lawson was particularly friendly with Mr Kidston, of Stow, whose attainments in theology were admitted to be high. The two were very intimate, and counselled each other in emergencies. It is told, that a female member of the Stow congregation made herself very officious in meddling with its affairs, and especially in interfering with the minister in his management of church matters. This vexation came to a head at one time, and Mr Kidston went over to Selkirk to consult with Dr Lawson as to the best means of putting an end to it. After hearing the whole story, Dr Lawson asked the name of this Diotrephesian female. 'Her name is Maggie Paton,' replied Mr Kidston. 'Very well,' said the Doctor, 'you must just go back to Stow, and bear it as you best can; for the fact is, we have got Maggie Patons in all our congregations.' An amusing incident took place, on one occasion, between these two worthies at a meeting of Presbytery. Mr Kidston complained to the Presbytery, that his brother at Selkirk had received into his congregation a family that had come to reside in the neighbourhood, whose dwelling-house was nearer to Stow than to Selkirk; and that this was contrary not only to brotherly courtesy, but to the usages of

the Church. On concluding his complaint, Mr Kidston said, 'I believe, notwithstanding of this, that Mr Lawson is a good man.' The reply of Lawson was brief but characteristic: 'Moderator, if Mr Kidston believes me to be a good man, he may say anything else that pleases him.' In the early days of the Secession, it was quite understood, when families changed their residences, and came within certain bounds, that they were to join the church nearest to their places of abode. It is within the recollection of living persons, that a sort of ecclesiastical cordon of this kind was drawn between the Duke Street and Anderston Antiburgher churches in Glasgow. Was this the originating idea of Dr Chalmers' parallelogram scheme? How completely has church extension laughed out of existence such a 'locksmith!' When Mr Kidston died, Dr Lawson was asked to preach the funeral sermon. He did so from these words—'Moses, My servant, is dead.' When at the funeral, he asked to see the corpse of his old friend. A member of the family accompanied him to the room where the coffin lay. He looked calmly, and but for a moment, on the face of the dead; then, wiping off the falling tear, left the room, saying, 'Come away, James; I will see him again.' What a firm belief do not these simple but sublime words indicate in the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body! What a childlike anticipation of that future reality, where death-divided friends are to be for ever re-united! Dr Lawson transferred his love from the father to the children, and, while he lived, maintained the most intimate intercourse with them,—one of his great favourites, as we have seen, being the late Dr Kidston, of Glasgow.

Dr Lawson had a very dear friend in Mr Leckie, of Peebles, —a man of whom it is enough, in claiming for him true excellence, to say that he merited and enjoyed the society and affection of the Professor. They were near neighbours, and had sweet fellowship, especially when assisting each other at sacra-

ment times. He had a long and happy ministry, and finished his course only a year or two before Dr Lawson. What a man of God he must have been! He left a widow and a large young family totally unprovided for, and yet, when dying, he had not a care about their future welfare. 'The God,' he said, 'who has fed the old crow, will never allow the young ravens to starve.' The compiler's father died in similar circumstances, and manifested like trust. Old Ebenezer Brown, of Inverkeithing, was deeply solemnized one day, when he came up to Dunfermline to bid him farewell, by the answer he got to the question, 'Are you not very anxious about these children, whom you are leaving so destitute in this world?' 'Not at all,—not in the least,' replied the dying saint; 'I have given them up entirely to my God, and I know that He will provide for them.' Yes, there was faith, in these days, in Israel! and a mighty faith it was that grew upon, and grappled with, the promises and providences of God under the roof-tree of the old Secession manse. May the children walk worthy of their fathers!

But friendship with Lawson was not sectarian. He lived very pleasantly with all his neighbours, especially with those of the Established Church. With Mr Campbell, the Established minister of Selkirk, he lived upon very kindly terms, as the following letter of that excellent individual's widow, who still survives, most pleasingly illustrates. It was written to her nephew, the Rev. Dr Gillan, of Glasgow (now of Inchinnan), himself of large and liberal soul, who, in great kindness, sent it to the compiler on hearing that he was preparing this memoir. Mrs Campbell writes:—

'I have great pleasure in tracing my remembrance of the intercourse which subsisted between your beloved uncle and Dr Lawson. It was of the most friendly character, and lived without interruption from 1806, when Mr Campbell was ordained minister of Selkirk, till the death of his venerable friend, which took place in 1820. They never exchanged pulpits;

but when the Established Church was undergoing a repair, Dr Lawson kindly gathered together his flock an hour earlier every Sabbath morning, that Mr Campbell might have the same place of worship to meet in with his people in the afternoon. It was at this period that Dr and Mrs Brunton (of Edinburgh) paid a visit at the manse of Selkirk, when Dr Brunton preached in the meeting-house. Next day we had the pleasure of calling and introducing them to the venerable Professor. Mrs Brunton (authoress of the novels, "Self-control," and "Discipline") was greatly amused and much gratified by his playful criticisms upon her religious novels, which, he said, he could not altogether approve of, however beautifully they were written. Mr Campbell visited Dr Lawson on his deathbed: he was immediately admitted to the sick-room, and earnestly entreated to pray. I shall never forget the impression made on me, when one of the family told me that, shortly before her father's death, he had poured out a most fervent prayer for "Mr Campbell and his youthful partner." I was deeply touched, and went home and prayed for myself as I had never prayed before. Thus the petitions of the dying saint were being already heard. One of the Misses Lawson continued to aid your uncle in feeding the lambs of his flock, until her health made it necessary for her to withdraw from the fatigue of a Sabbath school.'

By Dr Douglas, minister of Galashiels; Dr Hardie, minister of Ashkirk, an accomplished scholar and an amiable man; Dr Chartres, of Wilton; and by Dr Russell, of Yarrow, he was also held in high esteem and affection. They all united in congratulating him when he received from Aberdeen the degree of D.D. With Dr Russell, of Yarrow, especially, he had both pleasant and profitable intercourse. His occasional visits were welcomed as those of a kindred spirit, to whose enlightened views on the great doctrines of our common salvation he could always cordially respond. The present much esteemed minister of Yarrow (son of Dr Russell) bore testi-

mony to this at the recent celebration of the centenary of the Selkirk United Presbyterian Church. In addressing the grandson, who now fills the pulpit, he very beautifully said, 'It is with pleasure and pride that I record the mutual feelings of regard between my father and your grandfather, which nothing ever occurred to disturb; an intimacy the more honourable to both parties, that they lived in times when there was not so much Christian liberality as now. Some years ago I was invited to advocate, in this church, the claims of a benevolent institution. The occasion was interesting, the audience, as to-night, overflowing. With feelings subdued and solemn I entered *that* pulpit, replete with hallowed associations and encircled with the halo of ancestral worth. I could not forget that it was the place long occupied by one truly a master in Israel and mighty in the Scriptures—who presided so ably over a school of rising prophets, and whom princes delighted to honour—who was not more distinguished by the additions he has made to the theological literature of our land, than by a heart of warmest affections and finest sensibilities.'

Dr Lawson also lived upon friendly terms with the late Rev. Dr Walter Buchanan, first minister of the Canongate Church, Edinburgh. They frequently visited and corresponded together; and when Dr Lawson's sons, George and Andrew, were students at the University, they received from Dr Buchanan much kindness and attention. It was through his good offices that Dr Lawson was asked to preach the sermon on behalf of the Edinburgh Missionary Society, which was afterwards published.

And these have all died in the faith. Dr Lawson and his friends have long since met in heaven. Not one of them survives. The compiler had the honour and privilege of knowing a few of them, and therefore can intelligently affirm, that the one man around whom such kindred spirits were gathered, and who could both command and unite their sympathetic

admiration and love, must, beyond doubt, have been one of the excellent of the earth. The peer, in his social position, is not further removed from his vassal—the philosopher or scholar is not further apart from the ignorant clown—than was Lawson in every point of view, morally and intellectually, greatly the superior of the common herd of men. This will be more satisfactorily established as we proceed with the memoir.

CHAPTER V.

THE SCHOLAR AND HIS BOOKS.

George Lawson was an accomplished scholar. This is the testimony of all who had the privilege of his private friendship, and among these may be reckoned some of the most learned men of his times and our own. The late Dr Lee, Principal of the University of Edinburgh, was educated by him in theology, and was often heard referring to the scholarship of his tutor as alike extensive and profound; and it is in the knowledge of many now living, that by the late Drs Dick, Marshall, Balmer, and Brown, he was esteemed to be the 'Christian Socrates.' These are no mean judges, and their testimony is sufficient. Still, some may be disposed to query this judgment, and request more specific proof. Taking their ideas of scholarship from the multitude of Biblical hermeneutical works, which are almost all the offspring of the present century, they dispute a claim for this distinction, unless some elegant octavos be produced, sparkling on every page with Greek and Hebrew characters, and gravid with quotations from German or Dutch authorities. If we are to judge of Lawson's learning from his writings, we will not find in them anything of this kind to support his title to such honour. It ought, however, to be remembered, that, in his days, this kind of revival of letters had not yet commenced. Its introduction into our theological teaching is mainly owing to the classical acquirements and tastes of Dr Lawson himself; after him, of his most distinguished pupil, the late Dr John Brown; and now far advanced

towards perfection by Dr Eadie. Besides, the circulation of lexicons and translations of German books bearing on the sacred science of Biblical literature, had not yet taken place. Apart from such evidence, we have to discover the scholarship of Lawson. Nor is this in any way a difficult task: the proofs abound; so much so, that 'he may run that readeth.' There are some days during which the revolution of the sun in the firmament is matter of faith. We have no doubt of it. Though we do not see the blazing ball of fire, his light is all about us. For a moment or two, now and then, some frail cloud disparts, the blue ethereal is seen, and the glory of the greater light in the midst of it. Of a similar kind is the evidence that now remains of Dr Lawson's wonderful scholarship. We know it from the chastened light which falls upon our minds from his writings, and from the occasional blinks that now and again dazzle our eyes. Had his life been written in the morning tide, ere the clouds of setting memories and friendships had gathered around him, we might have seen the ample volume of his acquirements with undiminished eye and unmistakeable proofs. Whoever has read with just discrimination the writings of this remarkable man, must be satisfied of this. If he be not, either his own scholarship must be very deficient, or his heart must be as narrow as his head. Sectarianism must be his blinder. Not the processes by which Dr Lawson arrived at his conclusions, but the conclusions themselves, overflow his chapters. In conversation with sympathizing friends, authorities and references, of different tongues and peoples, came flowing forth like a stream. His learning was known rather by his writings than in his writings. Had he been as aware of his singular acquirements as other men, and had he thought that useful purposes might have been served by the other course, he could with ease have pursued it. But it must be admitted that, at least in his own Church, there was no precedent for, nor even liking to, such a system of preaching from the pulpit or teaching from the

desk. The demands of each age are met by appropriate supplies; and it is good for the cause of orthodox truth, that, in a highly educated and intellectually excited age like the present, men and minds have been prepared to meet its severest appeals either to logic, letters, or criticism. Lawson's habits of study, his books, his literary tastes, his chosen friends, and correspondence with them, and his pastoral and professorial works, may all be referred to as evidence. Before entering upon these, it may not be out of place here to notice, that though in this respect he was distinguished among his brethren, they also were well-educated men. It is rather singular that the idea of an educated ministry should ever have been considered as the peculiar distinction of an Established Church. Whatever ground there may be for it elsewhere, there is none whatever among the Secession Churches of Scotland, and there never was. In Sir Henry Wellwood Moncreiff's 'Life of Dr Erskine' we have the following testimony to this truth, and it is all the more valuable as coming from a reverend baronet of the Kirk:—

'The candidates for orders in the Secession have, at least, the means of being as well educated as the ministers of the Establishment. This fact, whatever additional strength it may give to the Secession, is of no small importance to the country at large; for, from the congregations of eight Seceding ministers, deposed by the Assembly in 1740 (adding to them the Presbytery of Relief, which sprung from the deposition of a single individual many years later), there have risen up at least, nearly 360 Seceding meetings, which, at a moderate computation, may, in round numbers, contain a fourth or fifth part of the population of Scotland. When so large a proportion of the inhabitants of the kingdom is concerned, it is at least consolatory to believe that they have access to instructors who are qualified to do them justice. The doctrines now delivered in the Seceding meetings are, in no essential article, different from the instruction received in

the Established churches. Though, by being more numerous, and always well educated, the Established clergy can certainly produce a much greater number of considerable men, it cannot be denied that, among the ministers belonging to the Secession, there are individuals not inferior to the most respectable ministers of the Establishment; and it ought to be in candour admitted, that their people are, by a great proportion of them, as well instructed as those who adhere to the Church."

In reading this candid testimony, while one cannot fail to be somewhat tickled at the venerable baronet's complacent Churchmanship, we must value it as proof positive of the learning of our own fathers in these days. If there was reason for Sir Henry's consolatory reflections then, how much more so now, when the 360 have been increased to upwards of 500 United Presbyterian ministers; and when to them must be added between 700 and 800 of the most learned and excellent men of the Scottish Establishment, under whose '*united*' and '*free*' pastorates three-fourths of the whole population of Scotland are placed. There is certainly more reason than ever to be thankful, that, though differing, and even separating from one another, all the three Presbyterian Churches in Scotland—the United Presbyterian, the Free, and the Established—have continued to strengthen and adorn the Christian pulpit with a fully educated ministry. And well it has been for the cause of Christian truth that it is so, cast as the ark of God now is upon troubled waters, and tumbled and tossed about amid mists and meteors that alike bewilder and bewitch the public mind. True, our learning is not our refuge nor our strength—God is both; nevertheless, it is matter of gratitude that we have both chart and compass on board, and pilots too, that shall weather the storm when it bursts.

Candid judges will admit that, on the field of sacred letters, the United Presbyterian Church has acted a part highly to

her credit. The literary galaxy of our country boasts many 'burning and shining lights' that were fed and fired at her altars. The names of the two Erskines, Fisher, Boston, Brown, Lawson, Frazer, Belfrage, Dick, Ballantyne, Balmer, Marshall, Dr John Brown, and Dr Husband, among the dead, with many others among the living, whom it would be invidious to mention, are enough to make a Scotchman proud of the sons of her yeomen. It is just, however, to Dr Lawson to state, that some of the most eminent at least of those who have fulfilled their course, not only studied under him, but got their literary stimuli very strongly from his scholarship and tuition. In another place, we shall see the eminent of other denominations paying homage to his influence. From the days, indeed, of his professorship until now, the Church and the Church's literature have both felt and been benefited by that influence. Who can doubt it, who has been privileged to mingle with the remanent members of the Selkirk Hall? Many 'Noctes Selkirkianæ' I have enjoyed with fathers and brethren who had studied under him; and who, without an exception, seemed to be in danger of worshipping his very memory. If not the mantle, the spirit of Lawson seems to have been poured out upon them all. The most of those Ettrick men were good and true in their generation, and in their office; and will not be easily forgotten by any who knew them—by none who were favoured with their ministry. Dr Frazer, of Kennoway; Dr Stewart, of Liverpool; Dr John and Dr Henry Belfrage; Dr Schaw, of Ayr; Dr Hay, of Kinross; Dr Fletcher, of London; Dr H. Thomson, of Penrith; Dr A. Thomson, of Coldstream; Drs Kidston and Beattie, of Glasgow; Dr Marshall, of Kirkintilloch; Dr Baird, of Paisley; Dr Nicol, of Jedburgh; Dr Balmer, of Berwick; Dr Brown, of Edinburgh; Dr Jameson, of Scone; Dr Newlands, of Perth; Mr Elles, of Saltcoats; Mr Smart, of Paisley; Mr Clapperton, of Johnstone; Mr Ballantyne, of Stonehaven; Mr Law, of Kirkcaldy; Mr Angus, of

Aberdeen, with others still alive, were, or are now, among the custodiers of a memory they could not let die. While, then, properly alive to all the advantages now derived from minds further on in time, and therefore higher up in the region of clearer and defter thinking, let us warmly cherish the conviction that, to the presiding genius of their Professor, these men were, and are, in many respects, greatly indebted for the direction, the employment, and the influence of their studies.

A learned man, now-a-days, is understood to have a thorough knowledge of the grammar, roots, and idioms of the dead and living languages, and to be versed in the abstruse, the ethical, and the metaphysical sciences. Such a *savant* is Lord Brougham; but where is such another to be found? Here and there we meet with one who is simply classical, or simply physical, or simply philosophical in his claims for learning or scholarship; but almost nowhere do you find in the same individual one who may be set down as first wrangler in them all. Neither, of course, do we claim any such rare excellence for Dr Lawson. All we affirm with regard to his scholarship is, that, in point of quality and amount, it seems to have approached nearer to the Brougham type than any others of the day in which he lived. This, unquestionably, is the impression left by his contemporaries, when they speak or write upon the subject. As evidence that this is not an exaggerated statement, the reader is requested to consider without prejudice the following most creditable testimonies:—

'His acquaintance,' says the late Dr Belfrage of Falkirk, 'with the best theological works, ancient and modern, was extensive and accurate. He greatly relished, and often read in the original Greek, the works of Chrysostom. The writings of Owen, and especially his practical works, he highly valued. The sermons of Massillon and Saurin he read with pleasure, and in French. The writings of Jonathan Edwards he care-

fully studied, and Campbell on the Gospels, with other approved works of sacred criticism: and it was pleasing to mark with what simplicity and perspicuity he could state the result of their most elaborate inquiries, making passages obscure and difficult intelligible to persons of ordinary capacity. He devoted a portion of his time through the week to the perusal of works of practical piety, such as Traill, Boston, and Brown. There is a holy unction and sweetness in them, by which the devout mind is charmed. It was by such reading that he learned to apply with fidelity and wisdom the truths of the Gospel for the advancement of piety in his own soul, and to qualify himself for speaking to the hearts of others. He used to speak of prayer as the best guide in the search after truth, and besought the Father of Lights to make him to know wisdom in the hidden part. But he did not neglect classical literature, philosophy, and history. "Plutarch's Lives" was a favourite book of his, and, from the incidents he details and the maxims of wisdom with which they abound, he introduced into his discourses many very appropriate and useful quotations, and from his lips they fell with a simplicity and gravity widely different from the levity and exaggeration of many such details. He was familiar with Homer and the lesser Greek poets, and occasionally quoted them with great readiness. The sages and the heroes of Greece and Rome he valued as monitors, to teach us the diligence with which we should seek for a higher wisdom and strive for a brighter glory.

'The whole range of history, ancient and modern, was quite familiar to him. Works of taste and genius he delighted to peruse, and by them he felt his mind relieved after severe study; but never did he devote to them aught of the time which was claimed by more serious engagements, or contract by them a disrelish for mental occupation of a graver cast. So admirable was the intellectual discipline which he maintained, that lighter scenes and feelings were not suffered to

distract his attention in serious inquiry, but were employed as stimulants in wisdom's ways.

'It was a circumstance which beautifully characterized his spirit and manner as a scholar, that, amidst his own acquirements, he maintained uniform modesty, and delighted to do justice to the talents and attainments of others. No jealousy or envy wrought in his breast, and so far from courting opportunities for displaying his research, his aim was mildly to instruct or encourage others to be diligent.

'As a minister of the Gospel, it was his great object to make his people stand complete in all the will of God; and for this purpose he expounded the Scriptures in a manner clear, lively, and attractive. He could avail himself of the stores of his mind, with the greatest readiness, to illustrate and enforce its various lessons; and places of the Bible, which are sometimes passed by as too abstruse for the comprehension of the people, or too barren for utility, he delighted to open up, and to bring forth the gold treasured in them.'

'It is a vain thing to imagine,' writes the late Rev. Mr Lothian, of Edinburgh, and one of the most judicious of Dr Lawson's pupils, 'that any man, who is not qualified to lay the whole compass of human learning under contribution for the purpose, can be ready to communicate instruction, as this great scholar was at all times, and in all departments of religion, natural and revealed. In geography and chronology, in biography and history, in antiquities and customs, sacred and profane, Dr Lawson was profoundly learned. He had studied with care the philosophy of language and of natural history. To physical and mathematical science he had in some degree turned his attention. In metaphysical and moral science he had no superior, and few equals. With the general principles of law and equity, which are recognised in the civil codes and in the political intercourse of all civilised nations, he was well acquainted. He understood and loved the constitution of his country; in principle and practice, he ever stood aloof

from political partizans; he "honoured all men" according to their worth, "loved the whole Christian brotherhood, feared God, and honoured the king, as appointed of God to be a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well."'

The next testimony is that of a man, above all others, capable of judging on such a point, and the earliest and most intimate friend of Dr Lawson—the Rev. David Greig, of Lochgelly. When Mr Lothian was a student, he was under Mr Greig's pastoral care; and on leaving Lochgelly for the Hall, he made inquiries of his minister regarding the Professor at Selkirk, of whose high character and attainments he at that time knew nothing. 'You are going,' said Mr Greig, 'to be taught by a man every way so learned and excellent, that probably he has not, in these respects, ten equals or one superior in Scotland; and what is best of all, he does not himself know or suppose that such is or can be the case.'

The Rev. John Johnston had gone on a visit to the well-known Adam Hope, the rector of Annan Academy. Mr Hope was a capital scholar, and especially a profound mathematician. In his estimation there were not such two men on the earth as Dr Lawson and Mr Johnston of Ecclefechan, for scholarship or general Christian worth. When he was waited upon at this time by the son of his Ecclefechan friend, he was deeply engaged in reading. He desired Mr Johnston to take a seat, and excuse him for a few minutes. In a little he closed the book, and, addressing his visitor, said, 'I have just been reading Dr Lawson's lectures on the book of Esther; it is a wonderful production. That man, I believe, knows more of Divine truth than many saints may, after they have been twenty years in heaven.'

It is with much satisfaction that we quote a high authority upon this point. In Dr Cairns' scholarly memoir of Dr Brown, he thus generously and justly refers to Dr Lawson: 'No adequate record of this remarkable person has been given

to the world; but the fragments of biographical information and the traditions of his pupils, together with his writings, show him to have been a man almost unique in point of character. So wonderful was his memory, that he could nearly have reproduced the English Bible, on which he habitually lectured to his congregation with the book shut. He had also by heart large portions of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, as well as of the classics. He had studied the Fathers more as a divine of the seventeenth century than of the eighteenth, and his range of information in modern divinity and church history was equally extensive. His powers of original thought, though not equal to his learning, were also great. He was able to reduce the structure of dogmatic theology to a form less abstruse and technical than usual, and to open up a vein of moral instruction too little cultivated before, and which, in his works on Esther, the Proverbs, and other parts of Scripture, yields results which have not been often surpassed for sagacity and deep knowledge of human nature. A sanctity and purity worthy of an ancient prophet were in him softened by a most amiable natural temper, and relieved by a familiarity of manner, descending to negligence, as well as by a large intermixture of genuine Scottish humour, which at times recalled to his pupils the irony of Socrates. A generous sympathy with liberty of inquiry and the cause of progress in the Church as well as in the world, crowned his admirable character. Few theologians of his time, attached to the orthodox side, were so little fettered by the traditions of churches in interpreting the Word of God.'

With regard to Dr Brown's own estimate of his great tutor's learning, Dr Cairns also tells us that 'the terms in which he continued to speak of Dr Lawson to the last, were those of almost unbounded love and veneration. He describes him as a man "in whom met strong natural talent, extensive and varied professional learning, originality of view, soundness of mind, strict integrity, deep devotion, childlike

simplicity, unaffected humility and kindliness of heart, in rare, and, so far as my observation has gone, when the degree of the qualities is taken into account, in singular union." "To have enjoyed," Dr Brown says, "the advantage and tuition of this truly great and good man, I count one of the principal blessings and honours of my life; and I have a melancholy satisfaction in thus recording the indelible impression made on my mind by so much erudition and wisdom, worth and benevolence." "The world," he loved to say, "will never know all that was in that man." On the occasion of his last public appearance, he reverted, with deep feeling, to the days when, with the numerous band of his fellow-students, "more than fifty years ago, he used to listen to, and all but worship that Christian Socrates, Dr George Lawson." And he thus also records his estimate of his writings: "There is a peculiar charm in the writings of that sage-like apostolic man, Professor Lawson; writings in which most important, original, pregnant thoughts are continually occurring amidst those commonplaces of religion and morals, which must form the staple of all pulpit instruction."'

Having laid this solid foundation of pointed and erudite testimony upon the subject, we feel that, in our future references to Dr Lawson's scholarship and learning, we incur no danger of exaggerating the truth.

A man may be known by his company or by his books. Either way speaks well of Dr Lawson. His companions and friends, as we have seen, were few, but choice; they were the inner circle of his heart and thought. Beyond it, however, there were many excellent persons who prized his society. They had to seek for it, not he for them. They were drawn to him, from appreciation of his qualifications for imparting knowledge. If the secrets of his library could now be disclosed, we might be made privy to many a curious fellowship between him and his visitors. Here, in this library, he was, not Diogenes in his tub, but Moses in his chair, or

Solon at his desk—constantly reading, or thinking, or writing, or conversing. His most familiar intercourse was with the books themselves. He lived in and with them, and they lived in him. Crabbe describes it all when he says,—

> 'Wisdom loves
> This seat serene, and virtue's self approves.
> Here come the grieved, a change of thought to find,
> The curious here, to feed a craving mind;
> Here the devout their peaceful temple choose,
> And here the poet meets his favouring muse.'

Dr Lawson's library consisted of upwards of 2000 volumes, among which were the best Puritan and American divines, some of the Greek fathers, such as Athanasius and Chrysostom, with a considerable number of Latin, Dutch, French, and Italian works, all of which he read and quoted easily in their original languages. The reader may be interested with the following selection, as a mere sample of the books to be found in it:—

Augustine's Confessions.
Abbadie (J.), Les Œuvres de.
A Lapide (Corn.), Comment. in Scripturam.
Aristotelis, Rhetorica et Poetica.
" Animalium Historia.
" Varia Opuscula.
Antonini (Marci Aurelii), Meditationes.
Amesii, Opera Omnia.
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Wemyss' Biblical Gleanings.

This library was Lawson's earthly Eden. Here he delighted to read, and meditate, and pray. He knew his books intimately, and loved them only less affectionately than his friends. It has been mentioned as a remarkable fact, that many persons who make a very respectable figure in society never in their whole lives read a single book entirely through. Such was not the case with our scholar. He not only used all his own books, but eagerly availed himself of every opportunity to borrow when he could not buy. Indeed, the wonder is, that with his limited means he could collect such a library as he had. Where did he get the money? And where did he find the books? They were not found for him by any 'Congregational Minister's Library Scheme,' such as happily now exists in our Church; nor were they bequeathed to him by any predecessor or friend. From his eagerness to get possession of such old authors as he prized, he must have been a regular visitor at those old book-stalls and auction-marts which, in

his day, were much more common, especially the former, than they are now in Edinburgh. We have no information upon the subject, but do no violence to probability when we opine, that, as the family increased upon her hands, Mrs Lawson would wax more and more jealous of her husband's visits to the capital, and perhaps give a gentle hint to him to be mindful of the stipend fast failing away, with some months to pass before the next instalment. The gathering of these 2000 volumes has a history which it would be worth the antiquary's while to unravel. No doubt his practice of celibacy for a few years after his ordination enabled him to lay the foundation; but how the superstructure got up at all, is a mystery to all who do not believe in the blessing that seemed to rest upon the Selkirk pastor's basket and store. We doubt not Drs Peddie and Hall, and Mr Lothian, of Edinburgh, could have told quaint enough stories of their Selkirk brother's bargaining at the book-stalls in Leith Walk, where once stood and sold old books, men now at the very top of their profession, and the greatest living patrons of education and serial literature. A bargain he might sometimes get, but he no doubt oft duped himself, out of love to the 'lair' and desire for the book. And when he could not buy, he was ever ready to borrow. He might agree with the ancient who thought that he 'learned more from borrowed books than from his own, because, not having the same opportunity of revising them, he read them with more care.' But then, oblivious as he sometimes was, he never forgot to return what was lent to him. His neighbour, Sir Walter Scott, had no reference to him when he once said facetiously to a friend, that 'he did not know what sort of arithmeticians some of his friends might be, but he was sure they were good *book-keepers*.' When a student, his limited means prevented him from buying many books, and then, of course, he had to depend upon the kindness of others. We have read somewhere that young men should not be discouraged from buying books—that

much may depend upon it; that Whiston's accidental purchase of a 'Euclid' at an auction excited him to study mathematics. This may be true when there is both the ability and the will to purchase; but the history of many a young man's education would reveal how much of literary progress has depended upon reciprocity in lending and borrowing. How pleasingly illustrative of all this is the following letter, which we have found among his papers, from the Sheriff of Selkirkshire:—

'SIR,—I am happy in having it in my power to accommodate you with a copy of *Sophocles*. The second volume of the *Biographia Britannica* is also sent.

'When I was last in Edinburgh, I bought a copy of *Claudian*, an author I had never read. There is one passage, in looking over it, which struck me as eminently beautiful. I send you an old torn school copy of my father's, which you may keep. The passage is marked, page 20, beginning,—

'"Sæpe mihi dulcian," etc.,

and ending,

"tolluntur in altum
Ut lapsu graviore ruant."'

This last sentence I have often seen quoted, and imagined it was from Juvenal, who has something to the same purpose, but differently expressed. *Vide* Sat. x. ver. 104.—I am, Sir, your very humble servant, 'AND. PLUMMER.

'SUNDERLAND HALL, 9*th May* 1793.'

He was not even averse to let his more favoured students have the private use of some of his numerous manuscript volumes. And we have reason to know that these were very highly prized—so much so, as by some to be copied out for their own use. The late Dr Brown enjoyed at one time this privilege. We find him thus expressing his obligations to his tutor:—

'Rev. and dear Sir,—Along with this I return you, with many thanks, two volumes of MSS.—the one marked 25, and containing notes on Isaiah, from chap. IV. *ad finem;* and the other marked XIII., containing notes on 1 and 2 Chronicles. I must crave your indulgence for keeping the notes on the first four and part of the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, for some time longer. I have been already deeply indebted to you in my editorial capacity, but wish to be not a little deeper in debt to you in this way. Mr Andrew was talking of something in the way of a "Comparative View of the practical tendency and influence of the Calvinistic and Arminian Systems," as being among your papers. If you do not think of publishing them separately, I earnestly wish you would honour the *Repository* so far as to make it the vehicle of your illustrations of this most interesting subject. . . . I request an interest in your prayers, in the new and somewhat trying circumstances in which, by the Leith call, I am brought. I feel strongly indisposed to leave my present situation, but would wish to discover the path of duty, and when discovered, to follow it. Present my respectful good wishes to Mrs Lawson and the young ladies. In them, Mrs Nimmo cordially joins with me.—I am, Rev. and dear Sir, with much respect and affection, your deeply obliged pupil,

'John Brown.

'Biggar, 18*th Augt.* 1817.'

Any friend or even neighbour had access to his books and his opinions. Foreigners and Papists even were not excluded. During the time of the war, some French officers lay on parole at Melrose. Three of them were intelligent and well-informed men, but strong Papists. They had heard that their language was almost as familiar to Dr Lawson as his native tongue; and having obtained an interview, they received from him such books as they wished and he had. One afternoon he took them by surprise. They were con-

versing upon the literature of France. The doctor arose, and took down from his library some old French authors, asking them to read certain passages which he pointed out. To their own chagrin, the officers failed on the trial. The great difference in spelling and in idiom was such as fairly to puzzle them, and they at once admitted it. The good man then, in an easy and fluent way, entertained them by reading the whole. One of these men, some time after he got better acquainted with Dr Lawson, conceived the idea of converting him to the Roman faith; and they entered calmly, but seriously, into controversy on the subject. As the officer was bidding the Doctor a 'bon soir,' he said—

'It is my intention to pray for you to the Virgin Mary at a certain hour this evening; and you will please take notice, at that time, whether you do not feel your mind undergoing a sensible change.'

'Well, if I am awake then,' the Doctor replied, 'I will.'

Next day the Frenchman called, eager to ascertain the result.

'Were you sensible of any change?' he inquired.

'Indeed,' replied Dr Lawson, 'to tell the truth, the only thing I am sensible of is, that I enjoyed a more than ordinarily sound night's sleep.'

Poor monsieur was chop-fallen, and resumed the argument, but to no effect.

'You wish me,' said Dr Lawson, as they parted, 'to pray to the Virgin Mary; but this I cannot do, and for these reasons: Mary is neither omnipresent nor omniscient; I cannot, therefore, be sure that she shall hear my prayers. Besides, I am now an old man, and having never prayed to her before, I am by no means hopeful of gaining her ear now, especially when she must be much engaged in listening to her tried friends in France and Spain. Though, however, I will not pray to her, I will try to imitate her example when she said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."'

On the officer's return to Melrose, several letters passed between him and the Professor, upon the subjects in dispute. We insert the following as a specimen. The reader will readily excuse his bad English and worse grammar. Bouard might have written in French, but it was something to show Dr Lawson that he had mastered so far his vernacular :—

'SIR,—I am very much honoured with your kind letters. If I have not answered to the first, it were for the want of being able to read it; but your last I have read, and understand it pretty well. Yes, sir, I put whole my confidence in God, in our Lord Jesus Christ; and more confidence in the prayers of the holy Virgin Mary, that all generations shall call blessed (Luke i. 48), than in mine own. I beseech our Lord Jesus Christ, that He may enlighten me more and more; that He guide me in the truth, and gives me all the grace necessary for the salvation of my soul, and be one of His true disciples; but, in the same time, if I have the misfortune to depart from His holy Roman Catholic Church, which is that holy Catholic Church mentioned in the Apostles' Creed, I beseech Him that He may afflict me, in depriving me of all my members, leaving me only the breast, to let me know and remember I have departed from that Church; I have sinned against the Holy Ghost, and He may give me a true repentance. Dear sir, you are yet mistaken on the worship of images—may be you take the honour we pay them for the worship that we owe only to God; that worship is expressly forbidden by our Pope's catechisms and the Catholic Church, and that Catholic Church teaches us that we pray the blessed Virgin Mary and saints; they pray for us to have more confidence in their prayers than in our own. I beseech you to try only the prayers of the blessed Virgin Mary, and you will see how more valuable they will be than yours. Direct your prayers to her in that manner (since you have no faith enough to believe she can pray for us). "O blessed Virgin Mary, pray

for me if you are able to do it, that our Lord Jesus Christ guide me in His true Church, and give me all the graces necessary for the salvation of my soul. O Lord Jesus Christ, grant me my petition by the intercession of the Holy Mother, if she be so much in favour with Thee; and do forgive me my ignorance." Dear sir, I beseech you do leave off of speaking against the Roman Catholic Church, because, as often as you speak against her, as often you sin. You do like St Paul before his conversion to our Lord Jesus Christ. The late event of the downfall of the most powerful monarch should open your eyes, even to all the world; and I pray God that it may, and be all for His glory. Amen.

'Sir, I wish, with my whole heart, you and I be guided by our Lord Jesus Christ, that He may abide in us for ever and ever: we live in Him, and Him in us. These are the sincere desires and wishes of your most humble servant,

'AUGT. BOUARD,
'A true Roman Catholic.

'MELROSE, *the 22d of April* 1814.

P.S.—You will find at Mr J. Ronaldson, at Darnick, several books of my religion, if you will read them. I advise you, above all, to read without partiality, the Explanation of the Apostles' Creed, and the Explanations of the Sacraments.'

The following is Dr Lawson's most masterly reply to the several letters of the Papist. Its Biblical knowledge, pellucid logic, and Christ-like spirit, are alike incomparable:—

'SELKIRK, *June* 4, 1814.

'DEAR SIR,—I received yours, and thank you for the deep concern you express for my eternal welfare. God grant that neither you nor I may mistake the path which leads to everlasting life. How terrible will it be, if we are found to have been walking in the broad way that leads to destruction, whilst we thought that we were daily approaching nearer to

the blessed objects of our hopes. But whilst I pray to God to lead me in His paths, I cannot see it my duty to pray to any of the saints departed, to enlighten my darkness. I find no examples of any such prayers in any part of the Scripture, from the beginning to the end of it. You have, indeed, produced many passages, which show that the saints on earth and in heaven have a certain kind of fellowship with one another. This is what no Protestant will deny. Certain it is, that when we come to the heavenly Zion—the Church of Christ—and to the Mediator of the new covenant, we come also to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to the innumerable company of angels: we rejoice in their happiness and glory. We know that angels are ministering spirits for us. But we know also, that they neither expect, nor will receive, religious worship from us. If I should pray to Peter, it is very probable he would know nothing of what I was doing; or, if he was near me, he would say, "Stand up, I myself also am a man. I am still a man in my perfect state. I am not everywhere present, or omniscient to hear, nor furnished with all power in heaven and earth to answer prayer." Should I pray to one of the angels, perhaps that angel to whom I present my request may be, at the time when I am praying to him, in France or China, or in his ordinary place of abode in the highest heavens; but if he were present with me he would say, "See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant, and the fellow-servant of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus." Do you not remember the caution given you by the Holy Spirit? "Beware lest any man spoil you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." You put me in mind of many passages of Scripture, in which the Apostle Paul requests the prayers of his brethren on earth; but you produce none in which he seeks the prayers of St Stephen or St James; and yet one might have reasonably

thought that he would often have spoken of his desire of their prayers, if he had wished to set us an example of soliciting the prayers of departed saints. He held the place of James in the college of the apostles; and his conversion may well be accounted an answer to Stephen's prayers for his murderers before that holy man was chased from the earth. I suggested to you a consideration, of which you took no notice, that we can seek the prayers of saints on earth, because we know how we may hold communication with them; but how can we know that the saints in heaven hear us, or how can we suppose it probable that they should hear our prayers from an hundred thousand places at the same time? They are perfect, but they are not present in more than one place at the same time. I desire, again, your prayers by this letter, if it should reach you. But when you are removed to another place of the world, I will not sit down on my knees and implore you to pray for me. I confess there is a great difference between you and the Virgin Mary; but the difference does not lie in properties, or in rights that belong only to God. What I mean by this observation is, that no good argument can be drawn from our desiring the prayers of our earthly brethren, to our requesting the good offices of those who are gone to heaven before us. I honour the departed saints. I know that they would rejoice to see me among them. But I would not give them the honour that belongs to my Saviour. They will receive me, I hope, with a kind welcome to their everlasting habitations; yet I hope to reach these habitations only through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is "the way, and the truth, and the life:" "No man cometh to the Father but by Him."

'Those passages of Scripture in your letter, which speak of the prayers of angels, give some appearance of support to your cause; but the question is, whether the angel spoken of in these passages is any one of the created angels, or that Person who is called the Angel or Messenger of the Cove-

nant (Mal. iii. 1), who certainly is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the great Messenger (as the word angel signifies) of the Father to men—the Apostle of God by way of eminence. "The Angel," says Jacob, "that redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." Now, who was the particular Angel that redeemed Jacob from all evil? None other of the angels were addressed by him in prayer but this one; and I think we are at no loss to know who He was. He was the Angel who is spoken of in another passage quoted by you (Hos. xii.). By His strength he had power with God; yea, he had power over the Angel, and prevailed. It would be a strange anticlimax (to speak in the language of rhetoricians), to say, By His strength he had power with God; yea, he had power over the Angel,—if this Angel had not Himself been God. It would have been as absurd as if it had been said of David, He had power over Goliath; yea, he could have killed that giant's babes if he had met with them,—a babe is not so far inferior in strength to a giant, as angels are to their Maker. But the prophet himself leaves us little room to doubt that this Angel was the Lord God of Hosts (ver. 5). Or if this should be uncertain, the passage of history to which he refers will, I think, set it beyond all controversy in the mind of any impartial person. We find it in Gen. xxxii.; and we learn, both from the Angel who wrestled with Jacob, and from Jacob himself, that this Angel was a Divine Person. The very name which Jacob obtained at that time is a memorial of the Godhead of that Angel: "Thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel (the face of God): for I have seen God face to face."

'That the Angel who appeared to Moses at the bush was a Divine Person, we are assured by Himself. He must have been the Divine Messenger of the Father, or else a spirit of darkness that would sacrilegiously usurp the honour to him-

self that belongs to God; for He said to Moses, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." This Angel told Moses that He was come down to redeem Israel from Egypt. But it is very plain that God Himself was the Redeemer of Israel from Egypt; and He often speaks of this redemption as a reason why they should serve no other god in conjunction with Him. "There shall be no strange god among you." Why? "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt" (Ps. lxxxi. 9, 10; Ex. xx. 2, 3). Hos. xiii. 4: "Yet I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but Me; for there is no saviour besides Me." If the Angel that spake to Moses at the bush had been a created angel, who promised to redeem the people, that deliverance would have been a reason for having other objects of worship, and trusting to other saviours besides the one God of their fathers. But you see that it is in many passages of the Bible given as a convincing argument of the folly and wickedness of worshipping any other god but the God of their fathers. Now, the gods whom they worshipped along with Him were not generally supposed to be equal with Him. They were as much below Him, in the eyes of idolaters, as the saints are inferior to the great God in the eyes of many of your Church, although no doubt there are many in your Church, and there were many too among the worshippers of other gods in ancient times, who entertained less unworthy notions of the great Object to whom alone all religious worship is due. John prays for grace and peace to the churches, "from the seven spirits before the throne, and from Jesus Christ." Now, if created angels had been meant, I do not think he would have placed them in his prayer before Jesus Christ. Even if the Virgin Mary were to be prayed to, I do not think it consistent with the reverence due to her Son and Lord, to pray for blessings "from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the Virgin

Mary, and from Jesus Christ." I believe that your Church, as well as ours, think we have a good argument for the doctrine of the Holy Trinity from the institution of baptism, Matt. xxviii. 19, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" but the ground of the argument would be subverted if seven created angels are meant in the first mentioned prayer. If we could suppose that a writer, speaking by the Holy Ghost, could pray for grace in the same sentence, first, from a Divine Person, and then from some mere creatures, and then from another Divine Person, why should it be thought strange if we should be commanded to be baptized, first, in the name of two Divine Persons, and then in the name of one of the highest creatures, or whatever else the Holy Spirit may be made to signify? He is at least placed last in the list, which is not the case in John's prayer. The style of the book is figurative, and the number seven, denoting the rich variety of the influences of the Spirit, seems to be taken from the vision recorded, chap. iv. 5. The Angel spoken of, Rev. viii. 3, 4, is plainly the Angel of the Covenant. It is only through His merits and intercession that the prayers of the saints come up with acceptance before God (John xiv. 13, 14).

'I take the Angel spoken of, Zech. i. 12, to be the same blessed Angel; but if he were a created angel, all that you could legitimately infer from his prayer is, that angels pray for us, or express their earnest desire to God for our welfare, but not that we are to pray to them; and although the prophet, when he saw the Angel, had requested His prayers, I would not have considered that circumstance as a reason for praying to angels, whose presence I do not perceive by sight or some other of my senses. I could present my request to any creature whom I saw, if I were able to converse with him without terror. But how can I present a request to a creature whom I see not, and of whom I have no means of knowing whether he is within hearing of me?

'But I have wearied you, although I have passed over many considerations which I think would confirm the argument. I earnestly pray God may lead you in the good old way; that He may clear your mind and mine from all mistakes in matters of importance to our souls, and that He may enable you, and all of us, to walk worthy of the Gospel unto all pleasing.

'God grant peace to France and Spain, and may He enlighten all the nations with His truth. I hope you will not forget that it is your duty, as well as mine, first to "prove all things," and then to "hold fast that which is good."—I am, Sir, your most sincere well-wisher and humble servant, 'G. LAWSON.'

Dr Lawson used to say that he fully believed these foreigners to be honest and upright persons, whose profession, though that of a false faith, was sincere; that they wished to know the truth, but that their minds were so beclouded with prejudices, that it was no easy matter to cause the light to penetrate their darkness.

The Professor's reading was of a miscellaneous character. He perused, if not profane, every kind of book, from the moth-eaten folio to the tiniest pamphlet, from the agonies of master spirits to the sports of raw neophytes. Hence the surprise he often occasioned by giving quotations from authors, of whose existence, from his grave and simple exterior, it was conjectured he had never heard. At one time in the Hall he gave a lecture on 'Books,' taking for his text, 'And the books,' wherein he taught that all books are worthy of being read that contain useful knowledge; 'not even,' he remarked, 'excepting those which treat of the art of war: it is written in 2 Samuel i. 18, "Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jasher."' In general, he was no admirer of works of fiction. Certainly of the *habit* of novel-reading he highly disapproved, and made the very evident distinction

between the occasional perusal of such a work of the best class, and the emasculating custom of greedily devouring every tawdry romance that rises only to disappear. He had wisdom enough to hail the 'Waverley Novels,' believing that before them would flee away the trashy stuff by which our grandmothers had been vitiated. The circumstance of Sir Walter Scott being one of his nearest neighbours, no doubt helped to this. It is true he had 'passed away' ere the 'Great Unknown' had been unveiled: still, in common with all men, he had his convictions that his neighbour at Abbotsford had more than something to do with these bewitching tales. This just the more whetted his appetite for each successive spell of the Northern Wizard. He only declined to read these novels after the publication of 'Old Mortality,' wherein the character and conduct of the Scottish Covenanters are so impiously caricatured. The admirable critique of the late Dr M'Crie decided him, and multitudes besides, to give no further countenance to these remarkable fictions. This resolution has nothing whatever to do with bigotry. Dr Lawson's heart was not less enlightened than his judgment; hence, though fully alive to the beauty and witchery of the Waverley novels, he at once, on the call of duty, presented them as a burnt-offering on the altar of a piety as patriotic as it was Christian. In short, from all we have seen and heard of the library at Selkirk, we conclude that it must have been both the abode and resort of wisdom and devotion. Here he lived and loved, prayed and persevered, took and gave, wept and laughed, and grew in wisdom and holiness as he neared the better land. Here he had his 'sanctum sanctorum,'—

> 'Whose chamber all was hanged about with rolls,
> Some made in books, some in long parchment scrolls,
> That were all moth-eaten and full of canker holes:
> Amidst them all he in a chair was set,
> Tossing and turning them withouten end.'

What a pity that some Boswell did not then live to have taken down from his lips the innumerable escapes of a learning as extensive as it was pious, and as sound in judgment as it was copious of truth. The premeditated and casual utterances of such a man, during fifty years of scholarly and godly life, might have outshone the rare and meteor-like glimpses which Boswell has given of the great lexicographer. Truly did Dr Brown say of him, 'The world will never know all that was in that man.'

Dr Lawson's love for and study of the Bible merit special notice. He may have had his equals here, but it is difficult to conceive of any superior to him. To understand and inwardly digest that book, was his unceasing care. He did what he could, and he did it right nobly. He found that it 'made him wiser than all his teachers,' and educated him for heaven and eternity. The best book in his library, however, was the law of God written in his own heart. Every evening, before retiring to rest, he perused a portion of 'the Word.' He might have contented himself latterly with simply conning over a chapter in his memory, for it was almost all there; but he considered it his duty to show this mark of respect for God's truth, and also to exemplify the practice before his family. He assigned, as his reason, his wish, during sleepless minutes or hours, to have a selected passage at hand on which to meditate. Meditation, with him, was a *sine qua non*,—he neither could nor would do without it; and to his consistency and intenseness in this, may be traced a large amount of that scriptural element with which his conversations, discourses, and writings abound. He was also, like his father, a very early riser in the morning, and he strongly recommended the habit to his pupils. 'I have known,' he said, 'some whose habits were not regular, and yet they enjoyed comparatively good health, and lived to a good old age. On inquiry, I found that they were early risers. But I never knew any to enjoy either sound health or live to

a great age, who lay long in bed in the morning.' On getting up, he retired to his study, not so much, however, as he told, to read, as to meditate and pray. He often expressed himself in rather strong terms upon this subject, insisting upon his friends and people and pupils devoting a much larger portion of time to it than what is commonly given. During these really holy matins he was understood not to be engaged in any of his severer studies, though it sometimes did happen that, after his father's example, long before the break of day, he had performed some substantial piece of work for the pulpit or the press,—perhaps executed some Gospel ploughshare wherewith to break up the 'fallow ground.' It was, however, his wish that both his family and friends should not give him credit for hard study at these times,—as he said to one to whom he was mentioning the matter, 'I do not read; I meditate and pray.' That he lived in habits of close fellowship with God, cannot be doubted. A man who was so faithful and conscientious in all things, would not fail in this one; so holy a man must have lived near to the source of all holiness and blessedness. His countenance was the index of the 'peace of God' that reigned within him; its ordinary expression told that his 'inward man' knew a great deal about the intimacies as well as the intricacies of the Divine mind. Christian imagination, indeed, has no finer subject to work upon than these midnight studies of 'The Book' by the confessors and righteous men of former and latter years. History is not much burdened by telling the story of others who, in the night watches, gave up their souls to reading, and research, and thought. All knowledge is, in a sense, sacred, and there is a degree of majestic importance about the intense application of a human mind towards its acquisition; but we pass into a 'Holy of Holies' when we go into the closet and watch the lamps that burn around the student of 'the deep things of God.' There is a power of *thought* in that solitary reading and study of Scripture by enwrapt and seraphic

minds, that is truly thrilling. In Lawson's case it seems to mount up to the sublime. He must have had some glorious spiritual illuminations as he thus passed his hours of solitary devotion. We are told that when the German scholar, Tischendorf, at last discovered what he had been long in search of—the MS. copy of the Septuagint, and also a complete copy of the Greek New Testament, which had been hid for ages in the monastery on Mount Sinai—he carried them off in ecstasy to his cell, alone gloated over his treasure, and poured out his heart in passionate gratitude to God. He could find no sleep to his eyes that night, and sat up transcribing portions of the precious Codex. As profound, though less excited, were the pourings out of Lawson's mind over the Hebrew and the Greek of Scripture. Great joy had the German when he unbound the cotton rag and possessed himself of the '*Codex Sinaiticus;*' but not more so than had the Selkirk student, as from year to year he untied the Scriptures from their printed page, and transcribed them on his own heart and life.

To our mind, while accepting Dr Lawson's own account of his early morning work, this prolonged period of what he calls *meditation*, must have included a vast amount of what was ultimately proved to be 'hard study.'

The scholarship of Dr Lawson was in nothing so manifest as in his thorough acquaintance with the original languages of Scripture. He could read the Old Testament in Hebrew, and the New Testament in Greek, quite easily; and, as often as it was needful, quoted from them, apparently as much at home as when he employed the words of the English translation. In the Hall, when lecturing to the students or conducting an examination in the Hebrew and Greek versions of the Bible, he sometimes appeared without any copy of either. Whatever the passages to be read might be, he went on as readily as if he were reading from copy. It did not seem to matter much to him whether he had the book or not; for

sometimes, when he had one, it was seen to be lying before him upside down, and he proceeded in the same way, following the verses from memory, in lieu of the printed page. So prodigious, indeed, was his memory, that, after having once perused a book, he was master of its contents, and in whatever language that book might be written. It is said that, having read the sermons of Ralph Erskine, he had them almost entirely by heart. And it is well known that he had all the epistles of Paul in the Greek upon his mind, could repeat them as though he had been a Greek himself, and with as much fluency as he did the hymns of his childhood. If the old adage be true, that 'great wits have short memories,' there could be little wittiness in him; for seldom, if ever, is such a memory as he had to be found among men. He had nearly the whole of God's Word on his mind. The possibility of this has been disputed. It is nevertheless quite true. By the mouths of many competent witnesses it has been affirmed over and over again. But we have happily his own word for it; and, from the knowledge of the man's matchless truthfulness and unaffected modesty, which by this time the reader has ascertained, the testimony of his own mouth must be credited. For this interesting piece of information we are indebted to the Rev. Dr Simpson, of Sanquhar, who was one of his students, and who is happily still alive. He writes:—

'His prodigious memory was well known; few men were so well endowed in this respect as he was. It was averred, and with just reason, that he could repeat almost the entire Bible from beginning to end; and this not only in the English translation, but, in a great measure, also in the Hebrew and Greek. He never was at fault in giving a quotation, in my hearing, in the Hall but once; it was a verse in the first chapter of the Romans, in Greek. He stopped in the middle of it, and said, "Have any of you young men a Greek Testament? I fear I have experienced a lapsus of memory." And no wonder; for he was at this period on the extreme verge of old age.

To show, however, that the story about his being able to repeat the Bible from memory is not merely a popular report, I may mention the witness which the venerable Dr Kidston of Glasgow (long his honoured and confidential friend) bore to the fact, in my hearing, at supper one evening, when I was assisting Dr Macfarlane, of Glasgow, at the dispensation of the sacrament. Dr Kidston was a student at the time, and residing in his father's house at Stow. He was anxious to know if all that was said on this point was true. "Mr Lawson," said he, "we have heard that you can repeat from memory the entire Scriptures, and that if the Bible were lost you could restore it; is this true?" "I pray God," was the reply, "that such a calamity may never come upon the world;" and then, as he oft did, shading his eyes, and passing his hand over his hair, he added: "but if it did come, I think, with the exception of two or three chapters in the Old Testament, I might restore it all. I am not sure that I could give the Proverbs *in their order*, but I could repeat them one way or another." Young Kidston then asked if he would submit to an examination by him. "I dare say, William, I might." The Bible was then opened at random, and Mr Kidston proceeded to interrogate him as to the contents of such and such chapters. An analysis of the entire chapter was given first, and then he repeated every verse from beginning to end. Not satisfied with one trial, Mr Kidston went from place to place throughout the entire Bible, and never once found Mr Lawson at fault.'

To this testimony we can add that of Dr Johnston, of Limekilns, who informed the compiler that he and some other students were at tea in the Professor's one evening. Mrs Lawson took pleasure in drawing her husband out, so as to appear well before the young men; and on this occasion she asked him if it was true that he had all the Word of God upon his memory. He made a similar reply to the same question by Dr Kidston, admitting that he had, but specifying his difficulty about the precise order of some of the Proverbs.

This feat of memory, then, was no vain boast. His students, and the men of that day who waited on his ministry, testify that he was so perfectly familiar with the Word of God, as to be regularly in the habit, both in private and public life, of quoting from any part of the sacred volume with perfect accuracy, specifying also the chapter and verse to which reference was made. The following are interesting illustrations of this marvellous gift:—

The late Dr Jamieson, of Scone, very soon after his ordination in 1791, went to Aberdeen to visit Mr Scott (father-in-law to the late Dr Balmer, of Berwick). Dr Lawson was on a visit there at the same time. 'I knew,' said Dr Jamieson once to my father, 'that Dr Lawson had a most intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures, and a rare power of exposition. I therefore availed myself of this opportunity to ask him every now and then his views of difficult passages of Scripture. I found him to be very obliging and communicative, and derived most important knowledge from his sagacious and learned observations. Two things particularly struck me. In no one instance did he ever open the Bible to look at the passage, and he always reasoned from the preceding and subsequent context in the same manner as if the Bible had been open before him.' Again, one of his students had delivered a discourse before him in the Divinity Hall. In the evening of the same day he called upon the Professor, who, in a little, adverted to the circumstance. The text from which the student had preached was Psalm lxxvii. 19, 'Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known.' 'You treated these words,' said the Professor, 'as meaning that the ways of God are mysterious.' The student assented, remarking that he thought such was the view generally entertained. 'I do not object,' replied Dr Lawson; 'but do you not think that there is an allusion there to the passing of the children of Israel through the Red Sea?' The student admitted that probably there

might be, but that it had not occurred to him. 'Yes, it must be so,' said the Doctor; 'for it is immediately added, "Thou leddest Thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron."' In a valuable communication received from another of Dr Lawson's distinguished students—the Rev. Dr Pringle, of Auchterarder—the following very illustrative incident is mentioned. One Sabbath evening, Dr Lawson had determined to do what, as a rule, he never did—preach an evening sermon. He took for his text, Galatians vi. 11, 'Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hands.' After some preliminary observations concerning Paul as a bad penman, and therefore using an amanuensis, he said that his object in the discourse was to give an outline or syllabus of the contents of the whole epistle. He then closed the Bible, and, with perfect confidence in his memory, followed the Apostle from clause to clause, in a style of exegesis alike compressed, comprehensive, and lucid. Dr Pringle says, 'I never heard a more masterly, and, in any respect, a nobler Biblical discourse in my life. The discourse was not an hour in length, and yet it embraced the entire scope of the epistle. I could not help thinking, how high must be that man's estimate of the Book of books.' He was conversing on another occasion with Dr Pringle, and highly commending Professor Brown's system of divinity. 'I advise you,' he said, 'to read Mr Brown's tract on "Sanctification," and especially to commit to memory all the passages of Scripture quoted therein. I remember doing this myself: it was not Mr Brown's book, but one of a similar kind; and I derived great advantage from it.' The work of Mr Brown here referred to, bristles with texts. At this time, too, he strongly recommended his student to commit a Hebrew psalm occasionally to memory, and thus make himself familiar with the vocabulary.

The next instance of this peculiar gift used to be told by my father. Dr Lawson had been assisting in Dunfermline at

the dispensation of the Lord's Supper. At the close of the public services on the Monday, the brethren had met before parting, to spend an hour in devotion and godly conversation. My father had invited to meet Dr Lawson a most excellent minister of the Established Church, with whom he and Dr Husband were upon the most friendly terms—viz., the late Rev. Mr Thomson of Carnock, one of the successors of the godly Gillespie, who founded the Relief Church, now happily an integral part of the United Presbyterian Church. About that time, Dr M'Culloch, of Dairsie, had just published his Commentary on Isaiah. His evangelical brethren in the Church were proud of the learning displayed in it, as tending to the credit of their scholarship. Good Mr Thomson, but too well pleased to expatiate on the merits of the book before the Selkirk Professor, quoted Dr M'Culloch's exposition of a certain passage of the prophet, as affording proof of the talent and learning of the author. When he finished, which was generally after the patience of his auditors was gone, Dr Husband appealed to Dr Lawson to give an opinion. With a little hesitation, the Doctor said, 'The view which Mr Thomson has quoted as Dr M'Culloch's is taken from Vitringa, but the original text will not bear it out.' Having repeated the whole passage in the Hebrew, easily and accurately, he entered upon a critical examination of the original text, showing a complete mastery of the terms, structure, and pith of the passage. Mr Thomson was surprised: the brethren were delighted, and all were profited. He himself was the only unmoved one in the room, regarding the whole as an ordinary affair, and commanding equal admiration for his humility and his erudition.

Dr Pringle tells that on one occasion Dr Lawson was in Edinburgh, and called upon the late Mr Clapperton, merchant, with whom he had a business account to settle. Mr Clapperton invited him to dinner, to meet with an intelligent merchant. He went, and in the course of the evening the man of letters

and the man of merchandise got into a most interesting conversation on the commercial interchanges of the nations of Europe. The gentleman was not only delighted, but confounded, with the amazing accuracy and extent of the good man's information. He seemed to know every place and everything, and was as conversant with the subjects as if he had made trade his study. The merchant afterwards confessed that he had found Dr Lawson's observations instructive beyond anything he had ever listened to.

Sir J. Pringle, of Hayning, had a profound respect for him, and took great pleasure in having him over at 'the House.' A number of his noble and political friends, at one time, came down from London to Hayning. They were curious to know if there were any such folks as were called '*characters*' in the neighbourhood. Sir James at once thought of the Selkirk Professor, and told them that he had for a neighbour, perhaps one of the wisest and best men alive. It was agreed that he should be invited to dine. He came: the guests were all on the tiptoe of expectation; but were sadly chagrined when they beheld the simple and unpretending Seceding minister. Dr Lawson was not aware, was never aware, that he was anything of consequence to company, and for a while was treated with neglect, if not with disrespect. Sir James, however, chuckled at the thought of the surprise which he was sure, in the course of the evening, to give them. The opportunity came: the British Constitution was discussed; and by-and-bye the conversation fell into the merits and demerits of the Spanish Constitution, when the worthy man poured forth such a mass and variety of information on the whole subject of Spain and its politics, as to enchain every one at the table. On parting with them, one of them shook him heartily by the hand, saying, 'Sir, we were only anxious to see you at first as "*a character*," and now there is not one of us but what is ready almost to worship you.'

'Good-bye,' replied the Professor, and rode home.

The late Mr Clapperton, of Johnstone, once tested this wonderful power of memory in another way. He had been reading, with great interest, Gibbon's voluminous work on the Roman Empire; and soon after finishing it, he paid a visit to his great theological tutor at Selkirk. Somewhat self-important, from the feat of having read Gibbon, Mr Clapperton said to himself, 'For once in my life, I am qualified to hold a conversation with Dr Lawson on history.' He asked him whether he had read the history of the 'Decline and Fall.' 'Yes,' said he, 'I have; but it is some thirty or forty years since.' This was encouraging to the young pretender, who immediately told that he had only finished reading the book the other day, and commenced giving Dr Lawson an outline of what he remembered to be Gibbon's sentiments on some particular point. He had not proceeded far when the Professor thus interrupted him: 'Stop, sir, that is not the view at all which Gibbon gives.' 'Is it not?' queried Mr Clapperton, somewhat taken aback. 'No, sir, it is not;' and he at once quoted what Gibbon did say, and quoted the passage *verbatim*. Mr Clapperton, however, determined to enjoy himself, thought of another portion of the history, and, confident that he had a most accurate recollection of it, he continued the conversation. He had not advanced very far when Dr Lawson again interrupted him: 'No, no, Mr Clapperton, Gibbon gives a very different view of that matter'—and then he quoted the author, as before, *verbatim*. 'After these two failures,' as Mr Clapperton used to tell, 'I looked carefully round me before I made the next selections; but they shared the same fate, and so I gave it up in despair.' Mr Clapperton possibly did himself a little injustice when telling this incident, as it is well known that the Selkirk students were not unwilling to say something rather absurd or foolish, for the purpose of drawing out the wit or wisdom of their great tutor.

His wonderful knowledge of Scripture was illustrated once in a way alike surprising and graphic. As the friendly lighthouse in the ocean is guide to the bewildered mariner, so was he to his surrounding brethren. He was to them alike comment and commentator. In their Biblical difficulties, they either wrote or rode up to Selkirk, and were never disappointed. On one occasion, Mr Shanks, of Jedburgh, was much perplexed with a text. He could make nothing of it; but, determined not to give way, he ordered his horse, and set off, late in the evening, to Selkirk—a distance of fifteen miles. He arrived about one o'clock in the morning. He had to knock oftener than once before he was heard. The door, at length, was opened, and the servant asked who he was, and what brought him at such an hour to the manse. Having replied to all this, he insisted on seeing Dr Lawson. 'He is in bed, and sound asleep hours ago,' said the maiden. 'It matters not,' replied Mr Shanks; 'I must see him, and you will hold the reins of my horse till I come down.' He knew the Doctor's bed-room; and, having got leave to enter, all in the dark, he told Dr Lawson his errand. Though somewhat put about, and in a half-dreamy condition, the Professor commenced an exegesis upon the text in question,—quoted the context, referred to the parallel passages in foregoing and succeeding chapters, and cleared up the whole subject to his friend's satisfaction. Mr Shanks then thanked Dr Lawson, bade him good morning, quietly slipped out of the room, remounted his horse, and rode home again to Jedburgh. In the morning, about five o'clock, Dr Lawson awoke: 'My dear,' he said to Mrs Lawson, 'I have had a dream, a very pleasant dream, to-night. I dreamed that Mr Shanks, good man, came all the way up from Jedburgh to consult me about a text that troubled him.' 'It was no dream,' said Mrs Lawson; 'Mr Shanks was here, in this very room, and I overheard all you and he had to say.' It was with difficulty she could get him persuaded to believe that it had been so.

On going down stairs, he inquired at the servant if Mr Shanks had come during the night, and in what room he was sleeping. The servant assured him that the Jedburgh minister had really been in the house, but added, 'He is not in the house now, sir; he is at Jedburgh long ere this time.'

It thus appears that, though Lawson was not what John Wesley called himself, 'homo unius libri,' a man of one book, he was eminently a reader and a master of the best book in the world. His Bible lore was the secret of his pulpit power. His classical and philosophical acquirements no doubt adorned and enriched his discourses, but he never allowed them to veil the heavenly light, or silence the Divine oracles. They lay at his hand by tens and hundreds, and he quoted his authorities as if they were open before him. Few men were ever so independent of books as he. His memory was a library. He seemed to retain the substance of every book he had read, and in bringing forth his reasons, never seemed to be exhausted. Many wondered at his facility at producing sentiments and criticisms from the most recondite authors, on the spur of the moment, and as if he had just come from consulting them. Surely he might have appropriated what another great man once affirmed of himself, 'I am all memory.'

And from the very beginning it was so. The conversation reported between him and the 'young Kidston' at Stow, took place very shortly after his ordination. From a child he had known the Holy Scriptures, and when he became a man of God he was 'thoroughly furnished unto all good works,' especially unto the good work of a Christian bishop. He could not, therefore, fail to be both useful and respected in the pulpit. He was thus no 'stump orator,' but a calm, earnest, and sincere ambassador from God to man. 'I well remember his preaching,' writes Dr Simpson, 'and one thing that struck me was the remarkable simplicity that pervaded it. There was nothing which the cultivated or even the fastidious mind would be inclined to repudiate, while all that

he said was plain even to the most uninstructed of his audience. All seemed to understand him; and as he was never tiresome, the people seldom became inattentive. I do not forget the gentle way he once took to reprove sleepers in the church; he did not administer pointed reproof, but only ceased speaking for a minute. Immediately all heads were up: he would then mildly say, "Are ye not a strange people? when I speak, ye sleep; and when I cease to speak, ye are all awake."'

Such a man and such a scholar as this, could not fail to be duly appreciated by the religious denomination to which he belonged, and by the friends and patrons of learning in general. Accordingly, as we shall have to narrate in a following chapter, he was elected to the Chair of Theology, left vacant by the death of Professor Brown, of Haddington. Some years after this, his more intimate friends thought of obtaining for him academic honours. In these days, this showed considerable confidence and pluck. Though educated in the Scottish Universities, no title whatever, with one exception, had ever been conferred upon any of the ministers of the Secession. These good things were carefully preserved for the sons of the Kirk. The conferring at this time of the degree of D.D. upon a Burgher minister by a Scottish university, deserves more than a passing notice; its history is interesting. Would that all since conferred had been as honourably gotten, and as worthily used! It was, then, after he had been thirty-six years in the ministry, and nineteen in the professorship, that means were set on foot to obtain for him this honorary academic title. My father, one of his most enthusiastic friends, originated the movement. He mentioned it to other friends and admirers of the Professor, and they agreed to make the application to the Senatus of the University of Aberdeen. When it became somewhat certain that the application would be favourably entertained, it was thought proper to sound Mr Lawson himself upon the matter. Consequently one of these friends paid him a visit,

told him what had been done, and asked him if he would accept the honour sought for him by his brethren. He was astonished and pained at first, and, for once in his life, felt himself puzzled and perplexed. A considerable time elapsed before he could make up his mind as to what he ought to do. At last he sent the following reply: 'I never aspired to literary honours; I do not feel myself to be worthy of them: but since the partial esteem and love of my brethren have sought this honour for me, and obtained it from the liberality of the men of the North, I will accept of it with gratitude and pleasure; and from the great love I have for my brethren, and the high esteem with which I regard learned men of liberal spirit, I will do all in my power to be more deserving of their esteem and love than I have ever been.' Immediately after this he received a letter from Mr Ross, of Aberdeen, of which the following is an extract:—

'On the 28th ult., the University of Marischal College conferred on you the honour of Doctor in Divinity. This you should have been informed of before now, but I waited until Dr Brown handed me the diploma, which he did to day. It shall be forwarded in a few days to Mr Peddie, who will get it conveyed to you. Rev. Mr Glass, Mr and Mrs Scott (parents of the author of the "Visits to Paris"), Mr R. Maclaurin, and myself, desire to congratulate you on this occasion. Mr Henderson, Lauder, will give you some account of the manner of obtaining the degree; meantime, I would beg leave to mention, that to the Rev. Dr Douglass, Galashiels; Dr Hardy, Ashkirk; and Mr Robert Clark, student, your friends here feel themselves much obliged for their friendly assistance. On Wednesday I shall send you an Aberdeen newspaper, where you will see the degree mentioned.'

In two or three days after this, he received the following congratulatory letter from one who not only did not envy him this academic distinction, though from his own attainments he was himself well deserving of the like, but had, along

with his colleague, done everything in his power to help it forward :—

Dr Husband to Dr Lawson.

'DUNFERMLINE, 3*d Dec.* 1806.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—Suffer me to congratulate you on the honour that has been conferred upon you. The Marischal College of Aberdeen is entitled to credit for its liberality. It is the first instance, I presume, in which the honour of D.D. has been conferred on a Dissenter, on the sole ground of his having learning, genius, and piety. Dr Young's degree stood on a different footing. It was the reward of his services as a political writer, at a time when the minds of the multitude were bewildered and agitated by theories which they did not understand. I understand that Principal Brown, my old class-fellow at school and college, was your warm friend, from the first moment the proposal was made to him.

'If any person is to be blamed for obtruding an honour upon you which you did not covet, it is my colleague. Mr Macfarlane was the *primum mobile* in the business, and has all along conducted the necessary correspondence with friends in Aberdeen, and others, from whom the necessary information was to be obtained. Our old friend, Sandie Scot, with Mr Ross, a merchant in Aberdeen, and Mr Glass, managed the business with the Professors. If your friends have erred, I am sure you will impute it to the high respect they have for your character. The College did not proceed rashly. It was after they had made the proper inquiries, and had perused your publications, that they came to the resolution of conferring the honour.

'The diploma is to be sent to North Queensferry, by the mail coach on Friday morning, where a person will be in waiting to bring it to Dunfermline. It will be sent to Selkirk by the way that you shall direct.

'About two months ago, Mr and Mrs Macfarlane lost an

amiable child,—a daughter, about three years old. They deeply felt the affliction, but, I trust, have been enabled to sustain it as becomes those who believe that our heavenly Father takes from us our earthly comforts, that He may give us better in their stead.

'What an awful storm has burst on the Continent! Is not our own hemisphere become dark and gloomy beyond all precedent in our history? Happy the man who has for his Friend, Him who rides on the whirlwind, and directs the storm.

'I beg my best compliments to Mrs Lawson, and to my young brother George, when you see him. I am his debtor for services rendered doubly acceptable by the ease and readiness with which they were performed. I promise myself the pleasure of hearing from you when convenient, and remain, my dear Doctor, yours most truly, 'JAMES HUSBAND.'

The Dr Young referred to in this letter, was the Anti-burgher minister at Hawick. After the breaking out of the French Revolution, he published a political pamphlet, entitled, 'Essays on Government, Revolutions, etc.,' which smacked strongly of Toryism. The Lord Chancellor of the day pronounced it to be the best he had seen. Soon thereafter he received D.D. from King's College, Aberdeen. He died in 1806, in the 29th year of his ministry. Besides the pamphlet referred to, he was the author of 'Sermons on Various Subjects' (3 vols.), and of 'A History of the French War' (2 vols.).

The congratulations on his D.D. would have been incomplete without one from his old tried friend at Lochgelly, and here it is:—

Rev. D. Greig to Dr Lawson.

'GLASGOW, *8th January* 1807.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have been purposing for some time to let you know that my friendship for you continues unabated, and that your image is often present to my mind.

No good reason can be assigned by me for being so long in acknowledging your letter, containing the warm expressions of your friendship for me and my family. I am at present in Glasgow, where I intend to remain till next week. You are often mentioned by your numerous friends here, who all rejoice in the literary honour which was lately conferred upon you. I hope you will believe me when I say, that none of your friends enjoys more satisfaction in that mark of distinction than myself. May you long live to enjoy it, and render your numerous friends happy by your friendship and edifying talents. I dare say you were not a little surprised when you first received the intelligence of the honour done you, and felt no small degree of happiness on perceiving how warmly your friends had interested themselves on your behalf. I much wish to see you, that I may talk over the matter with you, and hear from your lips the emotions which you felt on the occasion; but I must forego that satisfaction for some time, as I much doubt if I shall see you before the meeting of Synod. I left Mrs Greig and the family well; and we rejoiced together when we read in the newspaper that you were made D.D. I lately received a letter from Robert, and find that he was well at the date of it. Several people here have occasion to be in that country, and see him; and it is a great satisfaction to me and Mrs Greig to learn, that he behaves himself with sobriety, and is attentive to business. I need not tell you that the happiness or misery of parents in this world, depends not a little on the good or ill behaviour of their children. It is our comfort, that the hearts of our children are in the hand of the Lord, and that His covenant contains promises of grace in their behalf, which we are authorized to believe and to plead. You will, perhaps, have heard that a number of Ralph Wardlaw's people have turned Baptists, and have left him, among whom is a daughter of Mr Ewing and her husband. Ralph is about to commence author, by publishing Lectures on the 4th chapter to the

Romans, in which he intends to establish the doctrine of infant baptism.—I am, dear friend, yours most kindly,

'DAVID GREIG.'

On the receipt of Dr Husband's letter, he sent this reply:

Dr Lawson to Dr Husband.

'SELKIRK, *December* 1806.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—I certainly feel a lively gratitude for the kindness of Mr Macfarlane, and my other friends, who have put themselves to so much trouble to procure an addition to my respectability in the world; and I am better pleased with the success of their endeavours, than I would have been, if Napoleon had thought fit to bestow upon me one of those kingdoms or principalities which he has conquered, or is about to conquer.

'How amazing is the success of that great man! (for a great man he certainly is): what shall be the end of these wonders? God only knows—and that is sufficient. He knows how to execute His own purposes, which are always worthy of His invariable righteousness, and consistent with the mercy promised to Zion.

'Your loss of a child is an affliction common to mankind; but I hope that it is sweetened by consolations peculiar to them that love God, both to yourself and to your partner in sorrow. The comforting power of the Gospel is one part of that evidence of its Divine original, which is understood only by them that believe.

'You will let Mr and Mrs Macfarlane know that I sincerely sympathize with them. Their affliction might have been attended with circumstances much more trying to their fortitude; but they certainly need that comfort which God only can give, and which He richly communicates in His own time and way to all who set a due value on those sources of consolation which are opened to us in the Gospel. Blessed

be the speaker of those gracious words, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of God."

'May you never want the joys of friendship, to which you are so well entitled, nor those richer joys which we can expect only from the exceeding rich mercy of our God.—I am, yours affectionately, 'G. LAWSON.'

Dr Lawson recognised the honour done to him, by sending copies of his 'Lectures on Joseph' to the University. In acknowledging these, Mr Ross writes:—

'The difficulties in the way of obtaining D.D. were by no means few, or easy to be got over; but the very friendly and polite conduct of Drs Brown, Hamilton, and Professor Beattie, made them more easy than they would otherwise have been. The two latter gentlemen are very partial to Mr Glass. I was not in the least acquainted with Dr Brown, but got a friend of mine, a clergyman in the neighbourhood, to speak to him. The Doctor has much of the gentleman about him, and, I hope, of the Christian too. I heard him on Sabbath evening preach a most admirable discourse, for the Female Society, from Acts ix. 36. It was strictly orthodox.

All the friends of Dr Lawson felt as if a personal compliment had been paid to them by the degree from Aberdeen; such a thing had been hitherto deemed almost impossible. To some High Tory Churchmen it was most offensive; they looked upon the University as having dishonoured itself, and lowered the value of their academic distinctions. All who knew Dr Lawson, however, thought differently; and, by-and-bye, when he came to be better known over the Church, the verdict was almost unanimous on the side of Marischal College. A proposal, in some way to recognise Principal Brown's conduct in the matter, was readily taken up. The general feeling in reference to the whole business of this first Burgher diploma will be best understood, from the following

letter, addressed by my father, at the time, to Dr Adam Thomson, of Coldstream :—

Rev. J. Macfarlane to Dr Thomson.

'DUNFERMLINE, 13*th Oct.* 1807.

'DEAR SIR,—Some of Dr Lawson's friends have resolved to make a present of a piece of plate to Dr Brown, of Aberdeen, for the very handsome part he acted in procuring the diploma for our much respected Selkirk friend. Had he been so disposed, he might have demanded (as fees connected with the granting the D.D.) L.18 or L.20 sterling; but he generously refused it when offered. Besides, I have been informed that he has suffered many gibes from the Established clergy of the north, for conferring such an honour upon a Dissenter. These gibes, I have been told, he has uniformly repelled, by declaring that no part of his conduct in life gave him more pleasure, on reflection, than his obtaining, for the worthy object in question, the honour of D.D.

'Now, my dear sir, I hope the plan which Dr Lawson's friends have in contemplation, not to suffer such generous and liberal conduct on the part of Dr Brown to go unrewarded, will meet with your cordial approbation. To accomplish it, we will require, it is calculated, about L.40 sterling. The only difficulty in the way is just the raising of this sum. I presume that you, as a zealous friend of Dr Lawson will try to raise among your acquaintances, and particularly among your copresbyters, a few pounds—say L.10 or L.12. Whatever you do, I hope you will do it immediately, as it is intended to settle the business about the end of this year. By transmitting what you collect to Mr Peddie, Edinburgh, it will be applied to the above purpose. I am happy to add, from information received from some better acquainted with you than I am, that you will bless me for engaging you in this business of friendship and generosity.—Believe me to be, dear Sir, yours, with regard. 'JAMES MACFARLANE.'

From the well-known attachment of Dr Thomson to his Professor, there can be no doubt of his having given his cordial co-operation in this praiseworthy design to recognise the services of the Aberdeen Principal. This, at all events, is evident. The parties who took the active hand in it were men of highly honourable minds, and proved themselves to be worthy of the success which met their joint application for the degree. There was evidently no jealousy felt,—no mean grudging of such an honour to one to whom honour was due; yea, rather, they seemed all to feel as if the honour was shared in (as it really was) by themselves, and that therefore they were the obligated parties. With the sum raised, two very handsome silver cups were purchased, and in due time presented to Dr Brown. He was much gratified with this unexpected mark of the gratitude of his Seceding friends; and it produced such a favourable impression, not only on himself, but on many of his academical associates, as to render the repetition of the same graceful conduct on his part through after years, neither so difficult to him, nor so obnoxious to others. Shortly after the presentation, he addressed the following letter to Dr Peddie, of Edinburgh, who had taken, along with the others, an active part in procuring the necessary subscriptions:—

Principal Brown to Dr Peddie.

'ABERDEEN, *Feb.* 10, 1809.

'REVEREND SIR,—Yours and Mr Lothian's letter, of the 18th of last January, and the two elegant and valuable cups which accompanied it, were delivered to me by the Rev. Mr Glass, of this place.

'I beg, sir, that you and Mr Lothian will accept and convey to the other friends of Dr Lawson, who concurred with you in honouring me with this mark of your approbation, my sincere and humble thanks. I am sensibly affected by this expression of the good opinion of so many respectable persons, though I am conscious that my conduct, with regard

to Dr Lawson's diploma, possesses not the merit which they are pleased to ascribe to it. Whatever differences of opinion may exist among Christians, they may all unite in that mutual charity and love which delight to acknowledge, and, when opportunities occur, to know and distinguish the virtues and talents which they respectively possess. To cultivate such a disposition is, I think, in every man's power who feels the influence and energy of the Gospel.

'With lively gratitude, I accept the cups as a testimony of such respectable approbation. They will serve to remind me more and more of that genuine moderation and Christian temper which ought to animate all who name the name of Jesus in sincerity.—I have the honour to be, Rev. Sir, your obedient and obliged humble servant, 'W. D. Brown.'

Some few years after this, we find Dr Lawson in literary and friendly correspondence with Dr Kidd, Professor of Oriental Languages in Marischal College. The letters of Dr Kidd speak for themselves:—

Professor Kidd to Dr Lawson.

'Marischal College, Aberdeen, 28*th July* 1815.

'Reverend Sir,—In return for your 'History of Joseph,' accept of my essay on the glorious and ever blessed Trinity.

'The work you may probably have heard of, though not seen. Your station and profession infer that you are a competent judge of the subject; and as I have attempted to treat it in a way different from the usual course, I think myself safe in submitting to your judicious and fatherly inspection the performance itself. It will give me great satisfaction to receive your opinion of the work when you have perused it. If favourable, you may be sure it will add to my exertions; if not, I shall gladly receive information and correction. You will therefore please to express your judgment when you have made up your mind. The importance of the subject demands

attention from *you*, and a desire to be instructed and assisted from *me*. I count it my duty to ask information, and to submit to correction. And thus submitting the work to your judgment and decision, I find myself at liberty.

'With best wishes for your person, and earnest prayers for all the blessings comprehended in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, to rest for ever upon yourself and family, your pupils, and your flock.—I am, Rev. Sir, your most humble servant, 'JAMES KIDD.'

Professor Kidd to Dr Lawson.

'ABERDEEN, 6*th August* 1816.

'REVEREND SIR,—Having an opportunity by the young man who carried my parcel last year, I write inquiring for your health, and how all things prosper with you, your family, and flock.

'I had the pleasure of seeing young Mr Lawson, your son, last winter. It gives me a secret pleasure and satisfaction to see such a promising instrument brought into the Church, I trust, by her great King and Head. We had some conversation about you and your opinion of my essay. He said, as you wrote, that you had not time when it arrived to give it a careful perusal. I hope, since its arrival, you have found time to turn your attention to the way in which I have treated the subject, and that you are free from the absurd prejudice that, because we cannot in all respects comprehend the subject, therefore we should not venture to apply reasoning to it. Nothing can be more preposterous. It might as well be said that, because we cannot comprehend any one of the Divine perfections, therefore we should not venture to apply reasoning to it. There is not the smallest difference between the two cases, only we are accustomed to the one and not to the other. If we may discover the being of God by reasoning from the effect to the cause, we may, with the very same propriety, discover the adorable persons in the ever blessed

Trinity. For, after we have found out the being of God by reasoning, we have only to go one step further, and inquire, Is this God, whom we have discovered by the light of nature, a moral Being? And if so, that moment my train of reasoning presents itself to lead us to the adorable Trinity. I find all the Independents, both in England and Scotland, against my essay. And why? Because every man of them denies the eternity of our Lord's Sonship. Even Mr Wardlaw, who has opposed the Socinians so much, gives up the one half of the argument by denying the eternity of our Lord's Sonship. If our Lord's eternal Sonship be given up, the doctrine of the Trinity can never be defended. All the Anabaptists join the Independents in this. All the Welsh Episcopalians do the same. And, alas! how many others. It is even doubtful whether all Seceders be effectually informed upon this important doctrine. I send you half a dozen of copies of critiques written upon my essay by Dr Gregory of Woolwich, intended for insertion in the *Eclectic Review*, which the conductors of that work refused to insert, because either my essay or their denial of our Lord's eternal Sonship must fall. There was also a review of it in the *Methodist Magazine* for January last, and in the *Church of England Magazine* May last, both favourable.

'Now, reverend sir, I entreat you, for the truth's sake, point out to me what you may think exceptionable, and do help me to define the truth. I have no object or end but this. I have incurred the expense of L.300 sterling on the publication, solely for the truth's sake. Do help me.

'Long may you live to support and help to spread the truth as it is in Jesus.—I am, Rev. Sir, your most obedient humble servant, 'JAMES KIDD.'

The following are the books which Dr Lawson in his lifetime published, and which met with very general acceptation even in these non-reading days:—

I. Considerations of the Overture lying before the Associate Synod, on the Power of the Civil Magistrate in matters of Religion. 1797.

II. A Sermon, entitled, 'The Joy of Parents in Wise Children. 1798.

III. Discourses on the Book of Esther, with a few Sermons appended. 1804.

IV. Lectures on the Book of Ruth, with a few Discourses on the Sovereignty and Efficacy of Grace. 1805.

V. Lectures on the History of Joseph. 2 vols. 1807.

VI. A Sermon, preached before the Edinburgh Missionary Society. 1808.

VII. Sermons on the Duty of Parents to their Children, etc. 1809.

VIII. Sermons to the Aged, etc. 1810.

About a year after his death, was published in two volumes his 'Exposition of the Book of Proverbs,' 1821; and about twelve years after that, were published his 'Discourses on the History of David,' etc., 1833, to which a short memoir of his life is appended by the late Dr H. Belfrage, of Falkirk.

In addition to all this, it remains to be noted that this indefatigable scholar left behind him about eighty considerable volumes in manuscript. Among these are to be found disquisitions on 'Justification,' 'Sanctification,' 'The Privileges of Believers,' 'Faith,' etc., etc.; also expositions of Chronicles, the Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel, some of the minor Prophets, the Gospels of Luke and John, the Epistles to the Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians, etc., etc. He submitted the exposition of the Romans to the judgment of his friends, Dr Husband and Mr Greig. In the letters of Mr Greig to the Selkirk manse, there are frequent allusions to, and expressions of regret for the non-appearance of, the 'Roman Lectures.' Some of his favourite students managed to get the loan of several of these manuscripts. We have seen and used his notes on the Epistle to the Ephesians, which, for admirable practical and discriminating wisdom, have scarcely their equals, certainly not their superiors. If these notes were amplified, as Lawson could and did, and were then bound up

with Dr Eadie's masterpiece on the same epistle, they would constitute one of the most learned and useful of comments.

Dr Lawson's works met with a highly favourable reception from the public. The scholars of other churches hailed them as valuable contributions to religious literature. Only a scrap or two remain of the letters of congratulation which he received. When his 'Discourses to the Aged' came out, the well-known Dr Chartres, of Wilton, sent him this brief note:—

Dr Chartres to Dr Lawson.

WILTON MANSE, *Dec.* 18, 1812.

'DEAR SIR,—I and my readers have been edified with your "Sermons to the Aged," which are the more useful for their being adapted to the poor, both in the style of composition and in the price. I likewise print some things for the poor, and send a specimen, and "Thoughts on Education," by a niece of mine, on which I will be glad to have your remarks. May the Divine blessing attend our endeavours to be useful, and may our end be peace.—Your aged brother,

'SAMUEL CHARTRES.'

In the memoir referred to, Dr Belfrage very justly characterizes Dr Chartres as 'a man of taste and genius, whose mind was enriched by assiduous culture, whose character and manners were marked by a beautiful mildness and liberality, and whose life was devoted to the promoting of useful institutions and good habits within the sphere of his usefulness. Though some of his sermons are liable to serious objections in some of their statements of doctrine, they are rich in the counsels of moral wisdom, and are adapted with admirable fidelity and skill to the various classes and circumstances of society.'

Dr Hunter, Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh, heard Dr Lawson preach the missionary sermon referred to, and afterwards made this most correct criticism: 'Dr Lawson says great things, but he says them like a child.'

The serial literature of that day was not what it presently is. It might have been in some cases more select, but neither so varied nor multitudinous. As for that branch of denominational literature, it was then much about what it is now, and, we think, may ever be. Few great minds work in small circles; nay, few great thoughts, or principles, or reasonings, can be got together within such narrow limits. They refuse, not compression, but cellular imprisonment, where, in bonds and on bread and water, they must *dree* out their length and strength. Dr Lawson, however, was a kindly contributor to the magazines of his own Church; and his articles in them are exceptions, so far as they go, to what has been here advanced to the discredit of journalism. When it was decided to commence the *Christian Repository*, Dr Brown, of Biggar, its first editor, requested Dr Lawson to honour its pages with an occasional contribution, to which this reply was sent—(the 'book' referred to at the beginning is Dr Brown's first publication, 'Strictures on Mr Yates' Vindication of Unitarianism'):—

Dr Lawson to Dr Brown.

'SELKIRK, *Oct.* 1815.

'DEAR JOHN,—I remember to have heard your grandfather tell an anecdote of a minister, when he came up to the tent, after hearing a discourse from one of his brethren on the corruption of the human heart, and who made this observation on it: "My brethren, it must be confessed that we are very bad, but I hope not so bad as our brother would have us to be." I, too, confess that I was too long in answering your letter, but not quite so long, nor so inattentive to the contents of it, as you thought. I had heard that you were to be at Hawick communion, and hoped, if my information was good, to talk with you about your intended book at greater length than I could write. I think it will be of great use, and can see no reason for departing from the method you

had laid out. I did not think the objection you hinted at a valid one. What I would have talked about, was some useful things to which it was possible your plan might not direct your attention, although they might have been introduced without departing from it. But I believe, to avoid swelling the work beyond your intention, you will find it necessary to omit many things that must occur to yourself. I do not remember any book already in existence that comes so near to your plan, as some sermons of Dr Guyse, which you may probably have seen, on the "Utility of Scripture." But there are so many on the subject of the other book, that I should think it very difficult for you to give it much of the charm of novelty; yet I confess there is more of novelty and variety in Mr Belfrage's devotional pieces on the subject than I could have expected.

'I am in some doubt whether the intended magazine will obtain such a circulation as some of the brethren expect. Similar to many respectable publications of the same kind, I find, too, that there are several persons whose ardour for such publications abates in them so far, that they discontinue their demand for them. If the work, however, is begun, I will certainly comply with your request, if you shall think my contributions worthy of insertion. But I find it easier to make a sermon with a text at the beginning of it, than a short discourse fitted for a magazine. I have, however, a sermon lying by me, which may perhaps furnish a paper or two, and which I will send to you by your brother in Edinburgh. You will observe it is the last, and not the first, that I mean for insertion. The first is a discourse on the time when it was written. The second is a discourse on the use of the Book of the Revelation to common people, who have but little knowledge of the meaning of the prophecies. It will not, I suppose, interfere with the more extended work that you propose. If it did, I should not choose to publish, lest some should pay so little regard to my seniority, as to make

unfavourable comparisons. If you make the insertion, it will put you to the trouble of exchanging the introduction for some few sentences preparatory to the essay. I observe that the conclusion, too, has been compressed through the want of room.

'I will, *D.V.*, at my leisure, and at the leisure of the transcriber, prepare two or three more papers, and I suppose the proper way of transmitting them will be by your brother in Edinburgh.

'I am not without some apprehension that your health may suffer by too close application to studies. The former book must certainly have been the fruit of intense thought. You would find it a more easy, and not an unprofitable exercise, to perform a work which I remember to have once recommended to you—I mean, a second part to Rasselas.'—I am, yours affectionately, 'G. LAWSON.'

Among other articles of distinguished excellence, Dr Lawson sent to the *Repository* a series on 'Predestination,' in which the objections to this doctrine are repelled in a most satisfactory manner, and with uncommon perspicuity for so dark a subject. This was followed by another series, extending to six articles, on what he calls the 'Popery of Protestants,' in which he shows how much of the superstition, false doctrine, and evil spirit of the Church of Rome, are to be found among those who boast of their opposition to the man of sin. It must interest the reader to know that these papers were the very latest productions of his pen. The two first were published almost immediately before his death, and the remaining four shortly after it. Nothing could be more appropriate than these as his last counsels to the Church, to which he had been so long an ornament and a blessing. None of his contemporaries were more worthy to lift the trumpet of the prophet, and exhort Protestants of all denominations to cast out the leaven of the errors of Popery which

might be working in them. His age, learning, wisdom, experience, piety, and position, gave him the right to sound that trumpet as he did; and it would be well if some one on whom his mantle may now rest, were to issue equally clear and certain sounds in the ears of the churches of the nineteenth century. We have already noticed Dr Brown's desire to include him among his contributors. We subjoin a brief note which refers to the subject:—

Dr Brown to Dr Lawson.

'BIGGAR, 31*st Oct.* 1815.

'REV. AND VERY DEAR SIR,—I anticipate your thanks for introducing to you the benevolent Mr Joseph Lancaster, who is travelling through Scotland to diffuse the knowledge of his system of education. I have no doubt of your doing him any good office in your power, and furnishing him with your meeting-house, if he wishes it, for delivering a lecture on education. I return you many thanks for your valuable communication for the *Repository*, and look for a speedy repetition of the favour. . . . I have been laid aside from public duty for two Sabbaths by sore throat; but, by the goodness of God, I am in a state of convalescence. . . . When I write you on general subjects, I shall allow you to pay the postage; but when magazine concerns occupy the epistle, the publisher requires me to pay all expenses. . . . —Your ever obliged pupil, 'JOHN BROWN.'

When Dr Brown published his strictures on 'Yates' Vindication of Unitarianism,' he dedicated it to Dr Lawson, and sent a copy of the work to him. Here is the Doctor's reply:—

Dr Lawson to Dr Brown.

'SELKIRK, *Sept.* 2, 1815.

'DEAR SIR,—I hope ingratitude to man is not one of the

evils most incident to me; and yet I am afraid I have given you occasion to think that it is, by not sooner acknowledging your valuable and much esteemed favour. I hoped, before this time, to have an opportunity of sending you a letter (post free), or of seeing your face, for I was told that you were to be at Hawick communion. It was a very unexpected honour that was done me by you and your friend, to set my name before your book, and, I am afraid, would have been too strong a temptation to pride, were it not counterbalanced by too many causes I have to be humble. I find that I am esteemed more than I deserve, by some whose esteem I have every reason to value, and whose regard is a considerable ingredient in my happiness. But I would be too blind to my own defects, if I were not ashamed that I do not better merit their regard.

'I need scarcely tell you that I was well satisfied with your book. I had not seen, nor do I wish to see, the book which you confute. I feel myself entirely satisfied that you are too wise and too honest to deal unfairly either with your own enemies, or with the enemies of the truth. There is, indeed, no need of dealing unfairly with any of the enemies of the truth, and as little with the Anti-Trinitarians as any other. I prophesy that, so long as Bibles are so commonly read among us, they will not gain many proselytes in our land.

'I think that there is no subject which you would handle with more reasonable ground of hope to be useful, than the one you propose. I was very well pleased with the view which you gave me of your intended method. I do not recollect that there was anything in it that seemed to me to need correction. Some things occurred which I thought highly proper to be inculcated, which did not, perhaps, necessarily come into view, according to the analysis, but might fitly find a place. It will certainly occur to you, as an observation fit to be illustrated at some length, that although we can easily see how useful many things in the Scriptures are,

yet many things may be very useful and necessary, of which we cannot know the utility, and that many things might be in former times, and may be in future times, much more useful than at present. That must be an admirable Book, in which are laid up all the treasures of wisdom, which have been, or will at any time be, necessary for any of the children of God.—Yours affectionately, 'G. LAWSON.'

The sermon which Dr Brown preached before the Edinburgh Missionary Society was afterwards published. Here is Dr Lawson's opinion of it:—

Dr Lawson to Dr Brown.

'SELKIRK, *June* 24, 1816.

'DEAR SIR,—I have received and read your excellent sermon. I hope it has already drawn, and will yet draw, money from pious hearers and readers, which will turn out to the benefit of many precious souls, and to your own benefit and that of the Church. It is but little that most of us can give with our own hand, but to Him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.

'I am almost ashamed to meet with such testimonies of very warm attachment from you, as well as some other of my former pupils. It puts me in mind of your worthy grandfather, and makes me to feel how far I am his inferior in those qualities which conciliate esteem. But may I not hope, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, to be saved even as he?

'Your sermon has as much originality as was proper for the subject, and will be read with much pleasure by those who seek gratification to their curiosity, as well as by those who seek profit to their souls. I see you place the introduction of the Gospel into Britain later than many others have placed it. When you speak of its coming into France in the fifth century, you mean that it was then received by the French.

'I am happy to find that you bear the very heavy affliction laid upon you, in the way that you exhort others to bear the like affliction. You must, however, have deeply felt the difference between the knowledge and the practice of the duty of patient submission to the will of God. Yet it is always useful to retain the impression of duty, even when we find it impossible to satisfy ourselves with the performance of it. What are we, that we should set our wisdom or our will in opposition to the wisdom and will of the Most High? Are we dissembling when we acknowledge ourselves to be but dust and ashes, and obnoxious as sinners to the Divine justice? Did Christ die for us when we were enemies; and can we think that He deals hardly with us, when He carries to perfection the salvation of our friends, whom He purchased with His blood, though He does it by means painful to our feelings?—I remain, your affectionate friend, 'G. LAWSON.'

The following are the titles of the articles contributed by him to the *Repository*, in the years 1816–17–18:—'The Book of Revelation;' 'Reflections on the Battle of Waterloo;' 'Reflections on 2 Samuel xi.;' 'David's Sin with Bathsheba;' 'Objections against the Doctrine of Election Answered.' These disquisitions exhibit precisely the same mental and rhetorical features to be seen in his other works—the same massive thinking, acute observation, and practical aim. The article on election extends to four papers, which afford a very good specimen of his style of teaching as a Professor. The objections are fairly stated, and are met in a spirit equally masterly and candid. To some of the objections to the doctrine, this is a most satisfactory reply, and can scarcely fail of convincing the waverers. His reflections on the battle of Waterloo are worthy of his name. They exhibit, in a most impressive manner, a wonderful knowledge of Scripture, and a piety ardent and sincere. The whole of the sacred oracles are laid under contribution, to illustrate

the course and the character of Napoleon. His illustrations from Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon, prove the Bible to be a book for all ages; and that the principles which have been in operation from the beginning, operate now, and still produce the same effects. His exposition of David's great sin is a specimen of a model lecture. The sin is exposed, the sinner condemned, though kindly, the penitent judged to be righteous, and the pardon presented in such a form as to increase our hatred of the sin, and our pity for the transgressor. The knowledge displayed of human nature is deep, comprehensive, and varied; the knowledge of God, impressive and sublime. We lay down the article, persuaded that the Bible is a holier, nobler, and more delightful book, from having passed under the view of George Lawson's wonderful mind.

The following posthumous articles from Dr Lawson's manuscripts have appeared in the pages of the *United Secession Magazine*:—'A Sermon on 1 Tim. v. 23;' 'Drink no Longer Water,' etc.; 'Remarks on Job xxvi. 5, 6;' 'Remarks on Job xix. 21–27;' 'Extracts from his MS. Letters;' 'Reflections on Sore Eyes;' 'Letter to Mrs Plummer;' 'Discourse on Samuel xiii. 37.' To these, multitudes of other selections from his MSS. might be added, in no degree inferior to anything he himself published.

We cannot conclude this brief glance at the publications of Dr Lawson more appropriately, than by quotations from his most discriminating judges. Dr Belfrage thus estimates them:—'With regard to the writings of Dr Lawson, it is not necessary to say much, as the favourable reception they have met with from the public attests how their merit has been appreciated. The chief of these are lectures on the Books of Esther and Ruth; on the History of Joseph; and on the Proverbs of Solomon. No persons qualified to judge can read these volumes without being struck with the ingenuity and fertility of the exposition which he gives; the deep insight into the human heart and character they discover;

the engaging simplicity of the style, and their practical cast. There is not the least affectation of critical skill, by which many far inferior to him in scholarship have sought to astonish the vulgar; nor does he give any countenance to the practice of converting every incident into a typical exhibition of evangelical truth. Dr Lawson eagerly embraces every fit opportunity of adverting to the doctrines of grace, and to the excellences of the Saviour; and his acquaintance with history, ancient and modern, has enabled him to enliven these lectures with happy illustrations from incidents or characters. His 'Sermons to the Aged' are remarkably appropriate, and written in a plain, faithful, and earnest strain.'

Of the volume of sermons, published in 1810, by Dr Lawson, Mr Lothian thus writes:—'The same master-mind, the same fervent affection, the same manly and natural eloquence, which pervade all his former publications, are still found in the precious contents of this volume. The laborious polishing of ordinary thoughts this great man never attempted. His object ever was, to bring truth and duty directly and irresistibly home on the mind and heart. His style is always plain, but never vulgar; often tender, but never puling; sometimes sublime, but ever simple and perspicuous. If ever the reputation of his writings shall correspond with their intrinsic value, it will be high. They are well fitted to instruct, not the Christian people only, but the ministers of religion too. The lectures, in particular, on Joseph, Esther, and Ruth, exhibit admirable specimens of the most useful mode of expounding, from the pulpit, the historical parts of the Holy Scriptures.'

But the most discriminating estimate of the Lawson books we have read, is to be found in an able review of his 'Exposition of the Book of Proverbs,' supposed to have been written by Dr John Brown. The following extracts will be read with interest:—

'We knew well the amiable and the venerable author of

these volumes; we had full opportunity to appreciate his worth; we have never seen his equal in various respects, and cannot reasonably expect to see it now.

'All that could be said by those who knew well the reputation which, as a scholar and a man of original thinking, it was in his power to acquire, could not induce him to engage in any work of a learned description; and with regard to fine writing, it was as little his aim. In all the books that he published, the instruction of ordinary readers was manifestly his object.

'There was a modesty, a guileless simplicity, an abhorrence of ostentation, a sincerity, an explicitness, an unbending integrity, united to the utmost gentleness and forbearance, which characterized all his deportment, and communicated their influence to all the effusions of his pen—

> '"Cui pudor, et justitiæ soror
> Incorrupta fides, nudaque veritas,
> Quando ullum invenient parem?"

'Few men have been better qualified for such a task (the exposition of the Proverbs). He had a remarkable talent for generalizing moral instruction—it was, indeed, one of his great peculiarities as a teacher. He could take a maxim or precept of a general nature, and show its bearing on particular circumstances, notwithstanding the specialties which might seem to take them out of the rule. On the other hand, he could catch the principle implied in a particular precept, or direction, or reproof, and give it a general application, with the greatest facility. The simplest statement of fact, too, furnished him some practical lesson. It was this talent especially which gave him his acknowledged pre-eminence as an expounder of Scripture. This is displayed in every page of his lectures on the Books of Esther and Ruth; and it has rendered subjects apparently barren, full of instruction. With him every subject became instructive. It was, perhaps, on those that seemed the driest, that he ap-

peared, in comparison of other men, to the greatest advantage: "before him there might seem to be a desolate wilderness; behind him it was as the garden of the Lord."

'We have noticed Dr Lawson's unwillingness to undertake any work of a learned or critical description. This proceeded, without doubt, from that diffidence which persons of the highest talents frequently feel; yet it is not possible that he could be ignorant altogether of his great superiority to many who have made a considerable figure in the literary world. Such, however, was either the low opinion which he had of himself, or the high one which he formed of the requisites necessary to such a work, that the fact is as we have stated it; and the same cause seems to have operated in what he did write. He very seldom makes a critical remark; and when he does, it is in the fewest possible words: he throws it out and passes on as if he were afraid of being observed. Akin to this was his great reluctance to offer amendments on our authorized translation. He was not insensible that in many places it is susceptible of great improvement; but, besides his dislike to the practice of retailing scraps of criticism from the pulpit, he was extremely averse to anything which might shake the confidence of mere English readers in our excellent version, and consequently mar their edification. In expounding the Book of Proverbs, many opportunities might be found to offer remarks on the translation; yet he has made very few—he has seldom said the translation is wrong. In one or two instances he has mentioned a different reading. As an illustration, we may take his whole comment on the 10th verse of chapter x. He also directly corrects the translation of the 24th verse of chapter xix.; but it is in a foot-note, where he says, "The word *bosom* ought to have been *dish*." This short criticism is very characteristic of the author.

'Dr Lawson often brings a very happy illustration from an historical incident or classical allusion. Nothing, however, seems more remote from his intention, than to display his

reading or his scholarship. Nothing is done for effect, not one useless word is employed, and no reference is ever made to the source whence the incident is derived; so that very few readers can have any idea of the classical learning which furnished such allusions. For example: "Plato wrote on the door of his academy, 'Let no man unskilled in geometry come hither;' Solomon writes the very reverse on the door of his school, 'Let the simple man who is easily deceived come hither, and he shall learn that subtilty which is necessary to preserve him from the snare of the destroyer.'"

'The only other peculiarity in Dr Lawson's manner of writing which we shall now notice, is the extreme beauty of his illustrations. This appears in all his writings, but it is remarkably apparent in these volumes; his style is almost as brief and sententious as that of the Proverbs which he expounds. No better proof of this need be given, than that the whole Book of Proverbs, embracing such an immense extent and variety of matter, is explained in two duodecimo volumes, containing 940 pages; yet we will venture to affirm that nothing is left unexplained. Not one preacher in fifty (a thousand?) could have given as intelligible an exposition in three times the space. . . . There are authors who amplify so much, and keep the same idea so long in sight, that one may dose over a page occasionally, and lose nothing. But that will not do here: the mind must be always awake, and always in full activity. Not one word is employed by the author more than is barely sufficient to make his meaning understood. He presents the idea almost naked, never with the smallest portion of useless drapery, and leaves it to others to adorn it at their leisure.'

To the above critique on Dr Lawson's 'Exposition of the Proverbs,' it may be proper to add, that tributes, of another kind, to the excellence of his works have not been wanting. Without mentioning the name, we may call attention to the fact, that a living and distinguished American commentator

has, in his exposition of the Book of Genesis, made a most unwarrantable use of Dr Lawson's 'Lectures on Joseph.' From the 37th chapter to the end of Genesis, a large portion is plagiarized from the Scotch expositor—we should say, to the extent of two-thirds of the whole. The parts extracted are given word for word, with no other change than what was necessary to connect the sentences displaced from their original connection. Dr Lawson's lectures are published in two volumes, and matter to the extent of one of these has been thus appropriated. The American work, wanting the Scotch additions, would be the play of 'Hamlet' with the character of Hamlet left out. This plagiarism becomes the more wicked from the fact, that while about 120 authorities are named in the preface, to whom the author has been but partially indebted, the work by Lawson is never alluded to. The pilfering, indeed, is on too large a scale to run the risk of any such allusion. A more flagrant act of the kind cannot well be found in the range of theological literature. This author himself, perhaps, furnishes a parallel, and that in this same exposition. His barefaced and unacknowledged extracts from Andrew Fuller on Genesis, are nearly equal to those from Lawson. Fuller's name, however, is mentioned among the 120 authorities named in the preface. The temptation must have been powerful that could prevail on such a scholar to perpetrate such a wrong: the property stolen must have been considered exceedingly valuable, to warrant such a risk.

But there has been a similar robbery committed lately by one of our best *English* divines, in a recent publication on the Book of Proverbs. Page upon page is taken from Lawson, with only the most meagre and paltry acknowledgment. Like the theft-acquired children of the gypsies, the passages may be transmogrified, but their true parentage is very easily discovered.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HALL AND ITS MEMORIES.

In our approach to the Divinity Hall at Selkirk, we pass along somewhat holier ground than any we have hitherto occupied. Interesting as may be the other passages in this memoir, they scarcely satisfy the expectations, or realize in full the ideas generally entertained of a Professor whose very name, through his admiring students, has become amongst us an 'household word,' and whose reputation for learning and wisdom is still dearly preserved as a precious and holy legacy from the past. The stories and associations of that Hall have never been written, except in their grateful and savoury colloquies. Their eloquent memories were so many distinct histories of their tutor, and of his intercourse with them. At first, these were, and for many years continued to be, scattered broadcast over Scotland. Wherever a Selkirk student was settled, there was to be found a living monument of Lawson; and every one within sight or hearing became forthwith well acquainted, if not enraptured, with the grand old sage on the Ettrick. These Selkirk students are fast dying away, and the surviving few are more and more careful to preserve the trust devolved upon them. The present memoir may be regarded as an effort, only not too late, to gather up the precious relics before they have been irrecoverably drawn and lost over the rapids of time. Selkirk, indeed, and the banks of Yarrow and Ettrick, have become to us classic spots, as much so as are the Isis and the Cam to Anglican scholars. 'Selkirk (as one of them writes to the

compiler) was eminently adapted for study and sacred lore, removed alike from the levity and luxury of a capital, and from the noise and bustle of a commercial city. The town is dear to the hearts and memories of Burgher students. The first and the last glimpse of its spire, while yet seen from afar, have successively awakened emotions of joy and sorrow. There many of them lived their happiest days; nor is there one of them into whose soul the very name of Selkirk does not convey peculiar feelings,—the remembrance of joys once, nay, often present, but now gone for ever.'[1] It was a treat of no ordinary kind to listen to Dr Lawson's students when they sharpened up each other's wits on their Hall life,—a subject which never failed to come up when they met together on sacramental or Synodical occasions. Listening to the charming recollections of such men on such a theme, was our frequent privilege; and hence that peculiar feeling, which we scarce wish dispelled, that we also had been of their number, and had seen and known Lawson. If there be in the present portrait aught of life and expression, to this it must be ascribed. To the uninitiated it might sometimes appear as if 'Selkirk men' made too much of their favourite topic; but no one, in any degree aware of the worth and winning qualities of their venerable Professor, will accuse them of exaggeration. Every excellence that he had as a Christian minister and friend, circled around and enriched his prelections from the chair of theology. Such a combination could not fail to captivate young and generous hearts, and sufficiently accounts for their admiration and love. In depicting Hall-life under his professorship, we feel as if he himself were multiplied an hundred-fold, and that in every one of his students we had before us a reproduction of himself—that from him, as a sort of negative photograph, were taken so many pleasing counterparts. In promenading any of the great Continental galleries—at the Louvre, for instance, or Dresden, or Munich, or Berlin—

[1] Rev. James M'Whirter

you see, or think you see, many beautiful 'duplicates,' or, at all events, you are gratified with the identities of style in the performances of different artists. In like manner, we have been interested to detect, in the tastes and styles of our ministers who studied at Selkirk, such traits, and features, and manners as were deeply and unmistakeably Lawsonian. The very tones of his voice, and gestures and attitudes, have been retained, though, like the shades, they be now hastening away into that land of forgetfulness, the tombs of the prophets. The great moral influences, however, of this Christian Solomon still retain their hold of many, and will yet flow softly downwards when all of us have fallen on sleep. Mere touches made by a glowing wonderment pass away, while the die which stamps upon the soul a right holy image, remains to renew and make its impressions everlasting. Hero-worshippers are flitting apparitions,—the followers of the righteous are as angels, ever ministering to the heirs of salvation.

The Rev. John Brown, of Haddington, died in the summer of 1787. He had occupied the chair of Divinity in connection with the Burgher Synod, ever since the death of Professor Swanston in 1767. For twenty years our Church had been watered, enriched, and blessed with the prayers and labours of this most remarkable man. The piety, learning, and soundness in the faith, for which the Haddington students were justly esteemed, greatly contributed to the influence and usefulness of the young Secession. We are their debtors to this day. A giant himself, Brown gave birth to giants. In recording his death, Dr M'Kerrow thus chastely testifies concerning him: 'The character which he left behind him for piety, diligence, and theological knowledge, and fidelity in his Master's service, was highly honourable. The literary advantages which he enjoyed in early life were scanty, but there have been few individuals who, with such limited means of improvement, have risen to higher eminence in the Church,

both as a theologian and an author. The fame which he has acquired by his useful practical writings, and especially by his self-interpreting Bible, has been most extensive, and bids fair to be lasting. He is an encouraging example of what may be effected by dint of industry and perseverance in the acquisition of knowledge. The Synod, on receiving intelligence of his death, paid a just tribute to his memory by making honourable mention of him in their record as a person 'whose eminent piety, fervent zeal, extensive charity, and unwearied diligence in promoting the interests of religion, will be long remembered by this court, especially by those members of it who had the happiness of studying Divinity under his inspection.' They also agreed to insert in their minutes the following postscript, which was appended to a letter written by Mr Brown a short while before his death, and which was addressed to the members of Synod:—'As many of you have been my students, and most of you my younger in years, permit me to beseech you all to do all in your power to transmit Christ's truths as faithfully and diligently to posterity as possible. His truths and cause shall shine on earth, and especially in heaven, for ever, be they now as low as they will in Britain.'

We have seen that Professor Brown had a sort of presentiment that young Lawson would be his successor in the Theological Chair; and he was right. As the life of Brown drew to a close, the eyes of the Church were already fixed upon the scholar and divine at Selkirk, who was at once chosen at the very first meeting of Synod thereafter; and, as Dr M'Kerrow remarks, 'never did a Professor better justify, by his future conduct, the choice that was made.' Though this election was unanimous and very cordial, there was then, as there shall ever be on such occasions, a little diversity of opinion, especially among some of the brethren in the west of Scotland, who, from distance, had not had the same opportunities of judging of his fitness which the brethren in the east

and south had enjoyed. The Presbytery of Glasgow was understood to be more favourably disposed to the election either of Mr Belfrage, of Falkirk, or Mr Gilfillan, of Dunblane,—both men of profound theological lore, and well qualified to become teachers of the future ministers of the Church. It so happened that this Presbytery was appointed to supply Professor Lawson's pulpit for the first three Sabbaths after commencing his new duties, and a probationer of rather unpopular parts was sent, at their instance, to Selkirk. After the first Sabbath, the congregation were rather displeased with the supply, and some of them ventured to complain to Dr Lawson. To pacify them, he took part in the services of the following Sabbath. When alluding to this in after life to Dr Kidston, he said, 'I thought it better to prevent complaining than to give occasion for complaint; but I did not approve of those who murmured, for although Mr R—— is not a first-rate preacher, I never heard him preach a sermon—and I have heard him frequently —but he told me more of my duty than I had practised all my life; and whatever reason I might have to complain of myself, I had no reason to complain of him.' In writing to a friend upon this matter, Dr Kidston, in the best spirit, says, 'I may state that the choice of the Synod as to Mr Brown's successor, was really a compliment to my discerning. Before there was any appearance of another Professor being needed, I had, on several occasions, mentioned Mr Lawson as the probable choice of the Synod; and so little was he known to one, who afterwards proved quite of my mind, that he kindly requested me not to state my opinion on this subject, as it would bring my own understanding into suspicion. When Mr Lawson was chosen, I did enjoy a kind of triumph, of which my friend, by-and-bye, was a partaker.' It is due to Dr Lawson to state, that he himself was quite taken by surprise. He not only had no idea that such an honour was intended for him, but he was much disconcerted. When the

election was reported to him, and often afterwards, he expressed his regret that the choice of the Synod had not fallen upon his early and ever esteemed tutor, Mr Johnstone, of Ecclefechan. 'The Synod,' he remarked, 'has *done wrong* in not appointing Mr Johnstone to the theological professorship.'

In writing to compliment his early friend on the high honour which had been conferred upon him, Mr Greig, of Lochgelly, thus remarks: 'I can honestly assure you, that I reckon it one of the great pleasures of my life, that I have been favoured with your friendship, and that you are still pleased to rank me among your friends. Would to God I had more of His image, and were more worthy of your acquaintance! The moments I have spent in your company I still reflect upon with satisfaction, and think them among the best employed of my life. If I have not profited by your company, I am conscious it hath been mine own fault. The death of Mr Brown is certainly a very great loss to the Church. I never knew a man who seemed to have the interests of religion so much at heart, or whose zeal and industry to propagate them was more primitive and apostolic. But it was not meet that he should always live here, but depart, and enjoy the reward of his labours. He hath left a savour of religion behind him, and I doubt not that the fruits of his labours will continue in the Church till the end of time. The trust now devolved upon you will naturally lead you to reflect on many things in his conduct as worthy of your imitation in the discharge of it. Nor ought you to be discouraged, in performing that service to Christ and His Church, by reflecting on your inferior endowments. The Head of the Church hath received gifts to answer every exigence of His members; and may the Spirit of the Lord God rest upon you, as the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord!'

Immediately after the appointment of Mr Lawson to the Chair, a discussion arose in the Synod as to the propriety of having a salaried Professor, without a pastoral charge, and to be located in Edinburgh. The scheme, however, found but little favour, and was at once abandoned as, in the then circumstances of the Church, impracticable. After the first year, during which he lectured gratis, the Synod allowed the Professor L.30 per annum, to defray expenses connected with the duties of the Chair. Some years afterwards, on the motion of Dr Husband, this moderate stipend was increased to L.50, and there it stuck. In the last year of his professorship, the Synod made him a present of L.100. The idea of salaried Professors, without pastorates, is now afloat, and not a little can be advanced in its favour. That the present system has wrought well must be admitted. How otherwise can we account, not only for the high state of efficiency for which the Christian ministry among us is conspicuous, but for the great literary attainments of the men who have filled, and who now fill, our Theological Chairs? Neither are second in any sense to any ministry, or to any professoriate in the kingdom. While this is true, it may, notwithstanding, be a question whether or not the time has come when a change might be made to the advantage of all interests. If a Professor can devote the whole of his time to his own improvement, and to the training of his students, we may infer that the Church cannot fail to be a fortunate beneficiary by the change. The marvel is, that, with heavy pastoral charges, our Professors have been able to discharge their duties so very creditably. But is it fair and just to these brethren,—to the students and to the Church at large,—that such exactions should be made of them? We trow not. In this age, sacred learning has been set on the race-course along with everything else that relates to education, science, and philosophy; and our Church is sure to be left behind, if she be not so lightly equipped, in this respect, as to run with the fleetest. She is especially

called upon to lay aside every weight from the shoulders of her scholars and guides, and to give them all facilities to keep up with, if not to outrun, her competitors. We cannot see how this is much longer to be managed under the present system. Now and then a Christian Hercules, like our Professor of Biblical Literature, may arise, and perform, with equal fidelity, the duties of the pulpit and the chair; but to take this for granted is presumptuous and unsafe: and to draw even upon such an one for the full 'tale of brick,' is questionable policy, if it be not a cruel oppression. No man, however athletic in body, or accomplished and ardent in scholarship, can long maintain himself in full vigour, who attempts, and succeeds in his attempts, to uphold a masterly discharge of the pastoral as well as the professorial duties. He may go on for a time; but he may break down at mid-day,—a victim to short-sighted penuriousness, and an irretrievable loss to the Christian commonwealth. We trust the time is at hand when a change, in this respect, shall be made in our theological institutions. If the Church's treasury cannot afford salaried professorships, she can, by-and-bye, reduce their number, so as to admit of the reform that is desirable. But is there anything to hinder the employment of our present staff upon such conditions? Not only is the United Presbyterian Church becoming more and more wealthy, but, what is far better, the tide of Christian liberality is on rapid flow within her see; and it is neither perilous nor presumptuous to predict that the day is at hand when, for her own sake,—above all, for the sake of her Divine Lord,—she will devise and execute more liberal things for the maintenance and progress of sacred learning among her pastors and teachers.

The translation of the Divinity Hall to Selkirk was, as to locality, no very great change. Like Haddington, the town of Selkirk was small, and the neighbourhood somewhat pastoral and agricultural. There was neither the dust and din

of commerce, nor the excitements and temptations of the city, to divert from or disturb in study. In both, the students enjoyed the benefits of literary quietude and rural healthiness; while, from the absence of those attractions peculiar to the city, they were thrown more frequently upon each other's society, and thus laid the foundations of personal friendships which lasted while they lived. Our Church owes not a little of her happiness and influence to this binding together of her pastors. By this union in such close and endearing ties, the churches under their care have become partakers of kindred love, and live together as one in the Association. And who can tell how much of our ecclesiastical prosperity may be traced to pastoral unity? If the removal of the Hall to the city from the country were to prove an injury to the cultivation of love and friendship among the students, we should plead for the founding of a theological college far out of the reach of 'palaces and towers;' for, after all, it is not learning alone, however mighty and extensive it may become in a Church, that commands the blessing out of Zion. God Himself rules over His creatures by His love, rather than by His wisdom and His power; and, if we were put to it, as to whether we should have our pastors baptized with the spirit of love or crammed with the elements of learning, we should not hesitate to decide. Still, as the 'canny' Scotchman said, when King James offered him the choice of the vacant Bishoprics of Bath and Wells, 'baith is best:' '*ambo*' is here not only good Latin, but the best policy.

The new Professor entered upon his duties with a profound sense of responsibility from his acceptance of office. Descending to him laden with venerable associations, he felt it to be something like presumption to become the successor of such men as Ebenezer Erskine, Fisher, Swanston, and Brown. And there was no affectation in his demurring for a time to yield his consent; for, all through life, his rare and peculiar qualifications for the offices he held in the Church, were seen and

admitted by every one except by himself. Seldom does it occur that talents like his are accompanied with such meekness and self-oblivion, constituting a mental as well as moral charm, which made him a power and an authority in every circle. Once, however, in office, he set his face like a flint to its duties, and never flagged in their discharge for the long period of thirty-three years. Before proceeding to the review of his professorial labours, it may be proper at once to state that these were never allowed to interfere with his faithfulness as a pastor. His congregation knew no difference in this respect, except that during the sessions of the Hall the pulpit was supplied by the Synod's deputies. To this arrangement there could not be any wise objection. The congregation, indeed, highly appreciated the honour which had been put upon themselves by the elevation of their revered minister to such a high and honourable office. And while no man, however eloquent, who officiated during the Hall for Dr Lawson in the pulpit, was regarded by them as either his equal or superior, they were both pleased and edified by the variety of ministerial gifts and graces to which they were every autumn so considerately treated. The Hall work at Selkirk has been thus described by Mr Lothian :—

'The plan of Dr Lawson's theological course was simple and judicious. The students were required by the Associate Synod, after a liberal course of literary and philosophical studies at the University, to attend the theological instructions of their Professor for five sessions, and, besides, to give in discourses every year to the Presbyteries in whose bounds they resided. It was the wish of Dr Lawson that every student should have an opportunity of hearing his whole course of lectures on theoretical and practical Divinity. For this purpose, though each session continued only nine weeks, he regularly went over his full course on the system in five sessions. Were these lectures on theology to be given to the public, it is presumed it would be at once perceived and

acknowledged that they are in a very high degree scriptural, and evangelical, and profound, and luminous, and instructive, and practical. The students were regularly examined on the subject of the lectures which they had heard,—a practice admirably calculated to secure their attention, and to promote their improvement.

'The Doctor was accustomed, also, every session, to make his pupils read with him, and critically analyse, a part of the Holy Scriptures in the original Hebrew and Greek. Pertinent questions were proposed by him on such occasions, leading at once to the formation of the sound critic, and the edifying practical expositor of the Divine Word. The continued study of the original languages of the Holy Scriptures, and of their criticism, and of the practical use of the sacred volume, were thus strongly recommended. A laudable ambition to excel in these important exercises was excited and kept alive, and in many cases led to very laudable results.

'During the course of his first session of attendance, every student was required to prepare and deliver a homily on a subject assigned him by the Professor; and to prepare generally two, and sometimes three discourses, each of the other four sessions. All the subjects were assigned by the Professor at the close of one session, on which discourses were required to be ready for being delivered the session following. Of these discourses some were lectures, others sermons, some critical, and others practical, and one or more of them popular, to be delivered not only before the Professor and the students, but before all the people who chose to attend.

'Before delivering his own remarks on these discourses, the Professor gave every student who chose, an opportunity of offering his criticisms on what he had heard. Veneration for the enlightened and liberal tutor was found sufficient, in almost every instance, to prevent hasty and uncandid remarks.

'Few availed themselves prematurely of the privilege; but

almost all were zealous in preparing themselves for doing it wisely. It was generally by those who had attended three or four sessions that observations on the discourses were made. Always kept under proper regulation by the superintendence of the Professor, this exercise became a source of much improvement among the young men.

'No time or pains, which might promise to be useful, were spared by the venerable guide of their studies. On Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, he convened his pupils twice a-day, and once on Wednesdays and Saturdays; so that his ordinary sederunts with them every week were *ten*, or *ninety* in the course of each session. For the most part, these sederunts were long; not a scanty hour, but whatever portion of time was requisite for the important object in view, was cheerfully bestowed. On those days on which the Professor met only in the forenoon with his students, they either met in the afternoon by themselves, to deliver, hear, and criticise essays on important subjects, for their mutual improvement; or, in the evening, along with all the Christian people who chose to attend. These public meetings were held six times in each session: at every such meeting, three of the students, in rotation, or by appointment, gave out, each, a psalm or hymn, and prayed; and two others delivered short prepared and practical discourses, or addresses. Often the whole, and always a part, of the exercises at these meetings, was connected with the great and most interesting subject of evangelizing the world, by the dissemination of the Divine Word among all nations, in their vernacular languages, and by the labours of Christian missionaries. As long as his bodily strength enabled him, the Professor attended these meetings, to render them as useful as possible by his presence. He always spoke last himself on these occasions, and concluded with prayer. These meetings were well attended, and highly useful, it is believed, both to the students and people. They tended to cherish devotion and a missionary

spirit in all, and to form the young men for addressing a public audience with ease and readiness.

'Every meeting of the Hall was begun and closed with prayer. With great fervour of devotion, the Professor himself opened the first, and closed the last sederunt of each week; and the students, by rotation, opened and closed the other meetings with prayer.

'From this short account, it appears that the meetings, ordinary and extraordinary, of the Professor with his students each session, were 96. The average time devoted to each meeting was probably more, but certainly not less, than an hour and a half, or 144 hours each of the five sessions of attendance. This, it will be observed, is considerably more than the average time devoted to the public instruction of their pupils, by the Theological Professors in the different Universities. If we take the average of their sessions at 24 weeks, and their weekly meetings at five, each of an hour's length, the time employed by them in public instruction each session, will be 120 hours. This, it is known, is more time than is really so employed; and yet it comes considerably short of the time devoted by Dr Lawson to the instruction of his pupils, in his session of only nine weeks' continuance. If the session was short, it had the advantage of being *wholly* devoted to theological studies. The bell never, as at the Universities, broke off any important business unfinished. The students were never called off as tutors, or in any other character, to attend elsewhere to other business, and forget the sacred investigations in which they had been engaged. Teaching schools, or acting as tutors to young gentlemen, is the common necessary, and in many respects highly useful employment, for the greatest part of the year, of the great majority of theological students, both in the Established Church and among Dissenters. This makes it a matter of great importance, and almost of indispensable necessity, that the sessions of the Divinity Hall,

in such a body as ours, be short; and that they be held during the harvest vacation of schools and other seminaries of learning.

'Such is a general outline of Dr Lawson's mode of conducting the studies of the young men put under his care. There were occasional variations, according to times and circumstances, and to serve important purposes. To this plan, however, so comprehensive, so judiciously adapted to circumstances, and so well calculated, through the Divine blessing, to form his pupils for being able, pious, and useful ministers of Christ, Dr Lawson adhered, in its substance, for the thirty-three years of his professorship. In pursuing it, the whole circle of human learning was ever at his command. The powers of original and transcendent genius were ever manifest. The most profound discussion became always simple and plain under his management.'

Special notice is taken, in the above excerpt, of Dr Lawson's critical studies, with his students, of the original languages of Scripture. We have already seen his profound acquaintance with these languages, and his habits of perusing the works of the early Christian fathers. As an additional proof that the traditions of his pupils on this subject are not exaggerated, it may be here mentioned that, when on one occasion he was lecturing on the *Trinity*, he wound up his review of the Scripture passages in favour of the doctrine by this statement: 'You will observe, gentlemen, that I have not quoted the famous passage in the First Epistle of John, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." My reason is this: I doubt whether this was in the original epistle. I have read through the works of Athanasius, in the original Greek, and I do not find that he quotes it. Now, I think that, had it been in the copy of the Scriptures current in his time, he would have mentioned it The Trinity is the great doctrine discussed in his writings, wherein he strenuously

maintains the orthodox view, in opposition to the Arian. He is the great champion of Trinitarianism among the fathers; and a text so decided and forcible he would not have omitted.' In a letter, written in old age, to Dr Brown, he says: 'When I was young, I remember to have been well pleased with a discourse of Athanasius on the Psalms. The book is not now in my possession. He makes the difference between the Psalms and other books of Scripture, like the difference between telling one how a thing is to be done, and doing it before his eyes that he may do it after him.' We have thus his own testimony as to his familiarity with the writings of the Greek fathers, all the more weighty that it came out incidentally in the course of a discussion before his class. He was one of those scholars whose custom it was to go up to first sources for their knowledge. His was no second-hand erudition. He read the classics themselves, not translations; he knew authors by their books, not from quotations; his calm, inquiring mind was braced up for investigation on the mountain-tops of truth, or was refreshed by bathing in some of her deep, deep wells. But I count myself happy to have obtained from Dr Simpson the following beautiful and graphic view of his venerable tutor, which is, in fact, the counterpart of all the impressions received and cherished by the Selkirk students, and may therefore supersede any attempt otherwise to depict or commend him:—

'I do not know if ever there was a man in this world whom I esteemed so much as Dr Lawson. We were accustomed to compare him to the patriarch Abraham, on account of his amazing simplicity of character and devotedness to God. The first time I ever saw him was upon a sacramental occasion, on Tweed Green, at Peebles. He had come to assist the saintly Mr Leckie, of whom we may justly say that he had few compeers in his day for genuine Christian worth. In Mr Leckie's time the summer sacraments were deemed great solemnities. Vast crowds foregathered around the

tent, which was pitched on the velvet green by the side of the silvery Tweed, to hear the "glad tidings of great joy." While the holy and symbolic work was going on within the church, this tent was supplied by relays of ministers, who took their turn in preaching. I well remember, when a boy, of being present on one of these occasions, and sitting among the humming crowd on a bright summer Sabbath, before the services had commenced, and gazing on the glorious sky that over-canopied the basin in which stands the sweet little town of Peebles, and surveying the bright-edged clouds that floated along the tops of the grand old hills that stood as guardians around the congregated flock that had met, like the worthies of old in the lovely moorlands, to worship God, and listen to the message of His grace. Speedily our musings were interrupted by a somewhat sprightly and good-looking young man, who entered the tent and commenced the services. After the usual devotions, he read out as his text, "I will give him the morning star." This was John Brown, then of Biggar! When he concluded, he left the tent, and in a few minutes, while the vast multitude were singing, he was succeeded by a man of uncommonly venerable aspect. His text was, "I am that I am,"—words which he pronounced with great solemnity, and then proceeded to their illustration. I listened as he advanced into his subject, but with very little understanding of what he said. I thought at the time that this was a well-meaning man, but somewhat poor at the preaching. So much for my judgment and good sense in so thinking of the great and good Dr. Lawson, of Selkirk, for it was he who addressed the multitude; and my little line not being sufficient to fathom his depth, I sagely concluded as aforesaid. Little did I imagine that this same preacher was, in a few years thereafter, to become my teacher in divinity, and to be, in my estimation, a man who had not his equal in all the earth.

'I also well remember the first time I was introduced to

him. It was when I went to attend his lectures at Selkirk. I was prepared to see a man of a remarkably imposing aspect, and I was not disappointed. I felt so overawed in his presence that I could scarcely speak, and thought I was in the company of one who was almost more than human; but very soon his kindly manner and conversation removed everything like embarrassment.

'It was as students of theology that we had principally to do with him—as pupils in the school of so distinguished a master, and a master to whom our hearts clung with an inconceivable attachment, and to whom we looked up with unfaltering confidence. His prelections in the Hall were of the most instructive kind, showing great depth and penetration, and thorough acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, and with the entire system of theology. He was a master in the school of Calvin, whose dogmas on certain points some were inclined to think he carried too far; but, however this might be, his lectures afforded the richest illustrations of Divine truth that perhaps ever issued from a professorial chair. It would be saying too much, positively to affirm that his students derived eminent advantage from his discussions on recondite theological topics; any defect here, if defect there was, was owing to the pupils themselves, not to him. If a degree of carelessness and drowsiness was occasionally apparent in the lecture-room, that might be attributed to the narrow space into which the students were crowded,—generally a room in his own house, when he was unable to meet his class in the church.

'In his examination of the students, his powers of exposition became strikingly apparent. He knew the entire range of Biblical criticism, and could furnish, from the stores of his vast memory, the various views and opinions of divines, both of our own and of other countries, ancient and modern alike. One thing which greatly endeared him to us was the gentle yet faithful way in which he dealt with our discourses. He carefully avoided everything which might wound a young

man's feelings, his object being to encourage, not to dishearten. Harshness was alien to his nature; and while some critics are disposed to show their superiority or their acumen in always finding fault, and in saying severe things; as opportunities offered, he was ever ready to point out the excellences, and, if possible, to make them counterbalance the defects.

'It was the custom in Dr Lawson's time to invite the students in turn to give their remarks on discourses delivered in the Hall; and those who had more face than others, or who thought themselves competent, generally availed themselves of the opportunity, and some of them were even thankful for it. The custom, however, was bad, as many a modest lad found to his cost, and is now wisely discontinued. On these occasions, however, our venerable tutor uniformly discouraged anything like severity or injustice of remark. The following is a specimen:—A student, now a minister of distinction in our Church, had delivered a very excellent discourse, which was listened to with great attention, and which was favourably received by the critics in general; but a youth of some pretensions, when his name was called, sprang to his feet, and commenced his remarks by saying, "This, sir, is a good discourse, but it unfortunately happens that the division of the text is exactly coincident with, and precisely the same as, that given in a printed sermon by a celebrated preacher of the present day"— Here the good Doctor interrupted him by smartly saying, "Yes, Mr ——, but if that celebrated preacher went right in his division, was it therefore necessary that our friend here should go wrong in his?" This was a dead-shot, and the critic slunk back to his seat. No ungenerous insinuations could be permitted.

'Another student, when delivering his discourse, had used the phrase, "voluntary will," which, in the criticisms of a fellow-student, was pronounced a redundancy. Dr Lawson immediately replied, "I like very well to hear you correct

inappropriate human phraseology, but I do not like you to meddle with the words of God; and these words are His, as you will find in Leviticus i. 3, where it is written, 'He shall offer it of His own voluntary will.' Nor is this a superfluity put in by the translators, for the words in the Hebrew run thus"— He ended by quoting the original, and pointing out the precise meaning of the words in question.

'He encouraged us to come to him with all our difficulties. Professor Proudfoot (now of Canada) was once very much perplexed with some knotty point. He applied to the Professor, who solved it at once in a few sentences, and in the easiest manner. He seemed to have his mind fully made up on every abstruse point, so that he was at no loss to give a solution which at least satisfied himself. Withal, he never seemed to be aware that he was doing anything out of the common.

'We are not exactly aware of the extent of his scholarship as it respects the modern Continental languages; but it is obvious that, owing to the power of his memory, the acquisition of tongues must have been a very easy matter to him. In proof of this, he was, one day in the Hall, reading a long extract from a French author, in confirmation of some points in his lecture; and he read with so much fluency, that we never suspected it was anything else than an English translation he was using; but as he retired from the class-room, and left the book on the table, we found that it was the French edition, and that he had given an easy and distinct translation from his eye running along the pages.

'He was accustomed, when lecturing, first of all to find out the passages he was quoting from Scripture; and having read the first verse, he shut the book, and continued to repeat verse after verse from memory. One day he intimated his intention to give the exegesis of a very long chapter. Out of blameable curiosity, one of the students determined to test his accuracy, and kept his Bible open, watching him narrowly as he quoted

the verses *seriatim*. The exegesis commenced; as usual, after the first verse was read, the Bible was shut, and without a single error the entire chapter was explained. This student took tea with the Doctor on the Wednesday evening thereafter, and told him what he had done. He was not offended, but remarked, with his usual modesty, "Yes, the light on the white paper is now too sore upon my eyes, and I feel relieved by shutting the book."

'He was much troubled with dulness of hearing. He had sometimes to use an instrument while listening to the discourses. This infirmity occasionally led to some amusing mistakes, especially when a section of students was placed on the examination form. He was one day examining critically on the verses of a Hebrew Psalm, and asked, "What is the antecedent to Asher here?" The ready response was given by one of the students, "The devil, sir." "Yes," he replied, "the poor and afflicted man whom the Lord loveth." He had taken for granted that the answer was correctly given.

'We do not remember of ever having seen anything like a shade of serious displeasure resting on his benignant countenance, except once. A student had been gently reproved by him for having taken advantage of his position a little behind the Professor's chair. He *read*, instead of delivering from memory, part of his discourse. This was contrary to the rules of the Hall. He was therefore admonished to proceed without glancing at his manuscript. As he was going on, however, the Doctor, who probably suspected something, suddenly pushed back his chair till he came fully in view of the lad, whom he detected at his notes again. He considered this as an act of dishonesty, as an insult alike to himself and the class; and the castigation, which was fully merited, was in proportion severe. Mr Lothian has stated, in his brief but truthful sketch, that "his singular learning and holy zeal, his great diligence and ever manifest benevolence, produced and maintained among the great body of his pupils, filial and

habitual reverence and love. To shun what they knew would be offensive, and to do what they believed would be agreeable to him, was, of course, their study and their happiness. If an unfortunate individual, through ignorance and levity, delivered at any time what seemed erroneous in matter or unedifying in style or manner, or, if in anything his personal conduct was unbecoming or improper, the Professor's necessary though reluctant reproof was sure to be administered. Where an imperious sense of duty required severity, even he could be as severe as just, and benevolent, and wise. It may not be improper to allude here to an instance: One of the students, a youth of acknowledged talents, but at that time deficient in gravity of deportment, gave way to *open levity* at one of the public meetings with the people. At the close of next meeting with the students, the Professor said, evidently with much feeling, "I am much grieved that one of my students gave way lately, not only among his fellow-students, but in the midst of the Christian people, to levity of conduct altogether unbecoming a Christian on any occasion, and still more unbecoming a candidate for the holy ministry in a *religious* meeting of the Christian people. Let that individual, whom I will not now name, be careful to break off this iniquity by repentance, and let others take warning." The young man repeated the offence, and on noticing this Dr Lawson said, with great emotion, "It pains me to the heart, to be now obliged to say, that if such conduct be continued, it will be manifest that this unhappy youth neither fears God nor regards man." This individual, whatever might be the inducement, soon after left the body. But it is pleasing to add, that he is now a respectable minister in the Established Church, and that the error of his unguarded youth, so sharply reproved by his faithful tutor, has been long ago completely renounced. It is proper, however, to state, that this person did afterwards actually apologize to the Professor; at all events, he came for the purpose of doing so. Dr Lawson

having been informed that the levity manifested was occasioned by a circumstance which in so far made it excusable, stopped him as he began the apology, expressed the confidence which he had as to his demeanour in future, and conversed with him on other subjects in the most friendly manner. The only other instance of this class that may be noticed, was his mild but pungent reproof to two students who were whispering to each other during his lecture: "If your conversation is considered by you as more important than what I am stating, and you cannot defer it, you may proceed; but if not, you will wait till I am done."

'Dr Lawson was informed of certain innovations in conventional speech which were then beginning to be introduced. One afternoon, while lecturing, he observed that his class had become rather restless and inattentive. Thinking that he had exceeded in length, he lifted his eyes from his manuscript and asked the hour. A student who sat near him replied, "A quarter from four, sir." "What does he say?" queried the Professor again. "A quarter from four, sir." "Ay," was his rejoinder, "but whether does that mean a quarter before four or a quarter after it; if it is *from* four, on which side is it?"

'He was entertaining a party of students one evening, in his hospitable mansion; and, among other sage and memorable observations, we remember the following:—"We sometimes get credit for what we do not deserve. I was once at Peebles, assisting my excellent friend, Mr Leckie, at a summer communion; and just as I entered the tent to preach to the people spread out before me on the pleasant green, by the side of Tweed, a somewhat violent thunderstorm burst over the locality. I had come to Peebles with a particular discourse on God's thundering in the heavens, and quite intended to deliver it in the tent. The thunderstorm and the text seemed a wonderful coincidence; and the people concluded that I had actually chosen the one to suit the other, and had studied the sermon while the congregation were

singing the psalm; but little did they know that I had the whole cut and dry before I left Selkirk. Hence, we sometimes get credit for what we do not deserve; and, on the other hand, we are sometimes blamed when we are innocent."

'He was very kind in allowing the students the free use of his own valuable library. The Hall library was by no means extensive, though it contained a fair collection of good books; and this boon to the students was greatly prized and taken advantage of, especially as the Professor's stock included a number of rare and valuable works. The edification of his pupils was his great aim, and he grudged no sacrifice to promote it. Never was a father happier in the midst of his family than he was in the midst of his students. He seemed to experience a purely patriarchal delight when he convened them around him on the floor of the Hall. It was observed by his family, that when the session of the Hall drew near, he manifested a more than ordinary cheerfulness, and that he displayed a corresponding depression when the session closed. He was dearly loved by his pupils, and he loved them equally dearly. His hilarity usually appeared to the best advantage when he gathered a batch of them around him in his parlour to tea. His object was then to excite a spirit of cheerfulness and mirth in the little company, and to beget their confidence by his frank and courteous manner. Nor was he behind in retailing anecdotes calculated to stimulate a hearty laugh among the youths about his fireside. He used to say to us, that "cheerfulness tended greatly to longevity;" adding—"When I was a youth, I was much given to laughter. There were even some parts of the Bible that I could not read without laughing, such as that passage in the Prophet, which speaks of the ladies' 'crisping pins and nose jewels;' and also that of the prophets of Baal, where Elijah says, 'Cry aloud, for he is a god: either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.'"'

To this interesting sketch of Dr Simpson's may be added the congenial testimony of the late Dr Henry Belfrage, one of Dr Lawson's most distinguished students:—

'His manner was marked by mild solemnity, and his prayers and counsels by the unction of a heart full of the Holy Ghost. His demeanour to the students exhibited the happy medium betwixt the indulgence which youth is so apt to abuse, and the reserve it feels so galling. In him there was nothing of that inquisitorial jealousy which has led some to pry into every indiscretion; or of that sluggishness which never follows the young beyond the precincts of the seminary. He approved himself at once as their guardian and their father. He invited them to his house on suitable occasions, made them welcome to such books in his library as they wished to consult. When any of them required his counsel, it was given in a manner the most friendly; and when any of them were sick, he watched over them with the solicitude of a parent. When we think of the many young men who have been trained by him, and who are labouring in various places in Britain, in Ireland, and in America, we feel it impossible to estimate the results of his instructions, admonitions, and prayers.

'As a proof of his great prudence, it may be mentioned that on one occasion a present was sent to the Hall library of some books, among which were six copies of Paine's "Rights of Man." This was done at a period when the nation was agitated by political speculation, and such a gift to such a seminary was fitted to poison the ardent minds of youth. When he heard of this, he stated to the students that he could not permit such books to have a place in their library, or to be circulated amongst them. Though attached to liberal principles, he was unwilling that they should engage as disputants or partizans in the political contests of the day. It was in meekness, truth, and righteousness that he wished them to go forth as does the Captain of Salvation. The

selection of books by the students, for the library, was submitted to him for his approval; and his opinion was given so wisely and mildly, that, when unfavourable to any book, it was never resisted. As a proof of his amiable modesty, it may be mentioned, that, when any ministers venerable for age and wisdom visited the Hall, he urged them, ere they left, to give some counsels to his pupils; and I have seen this done at his entreaty with much judgment, delicacy, and kindness.

'The substance of his opinions (as a Professor of Divinity) will be found in the *Christian Repository* for March and April 1821, under the title of "Faults into which ministers may fall as to the matter and the manner of their preaching." Though he discharged his duties in this character to the high satisfaction of the generality of his brethren, there were some who, irritated at the part he had taken in the controversy respecting toleration, wrote him a letter, in which it was insinuated that he did not attend with the necessary strictness to the religious principles of his students. He sent no reply to it; but in conversing with a friend afterwards, he said, "I feel peculiarly hurt at seeing appended to it the name of one who should have known me better. His simplicity has been imposed upon by specious pretences. Another letter of that kind will make me resign my office."

'He often urged on his students to treasure the Word of God in their memories; and it deserves to be mentioned, that while himself a student he had committed to memory so accurately the numerous texts of Scripture at the close of the various paragraphs of Mr Brown's "System of Divinity," that this excellent man used to say, that he never found a student like Lawson, who could repeat them so exactly, and that he never run him out but once.

'The following are some of his counsels to the students:—"Pay respect and deference to old ministers. Attached as I am to Presbyterian parity, yet such modesty and deference are amiable in youth, and to them age has a claim." "A

good voice will go far with some to gain popularity; but rest assured it will take something else to maintain it." "When young men can bear to be *mimicked*, mimicry may be useful to correct improprieties. I once heard an imitation of my own manner; and had I been earlier aware of its defects, I might have been able to correct them."

'He felt a very deep interest in the settlement, the lot, and the labours of his students when they were ordained to the ministry. As an instance of this, it may be mentioned that, one morning, when about to partake of some refreshment with a friend, he requested him to ask a blessing, and to supplicate, while thus engaged, God's blessing on the ordination of one of his students, which was to take place that day. "I have endeavoured," he added, "to remember it before the Lord in private; and if my prayers are granted, God will bless him and make him a blessing."

'To his students, when fixed in scenes of pastoral duty, he was always ready to give his best advice; and their applications for his counsel were received with pleasure, and answered promptly and kindly. To those of them who did not obtain any fixed charge he was anxious to do justice; and, when opportunity was afforded, to excite them to labour to show themselves approved of God, and to maintain that meekness of wisdom, that patience of hope, those kindly feelings to their more successful brethren, and that diligence in study and in doing good, so difficult to be kept alive amidst the bitterness of disappointment and strong temptations to envy.'

The following Hall reminiscences have been gleaned from surviving students, and are submitted in the hope of still more deeply interesting the reader:—

He opened his lecture one day in the Hall with the following beautiful and impressive sentences:—

'Agesilaus, being asked what those things were in which children ought to be educated, answered, "Those things

which they ought to practise when they are men." The wise maxim was well observed in Sparta. The Lacedemonian lawgiver intended to make his countrymen a nation of soldiers; and by the institutions of Sparta, no day was suffered to pass in which the rising hopes of the country were not taught some lesson, or employed in some exercise, that might fit them to excel in arms.

'The Apostle Paul calls upon Christians to consider what the racers of the Olympic games did, and what they restrained themselves from doing and enjoying, that they might obtain a corruptible crown. Shall Christians, then, think it a hard matter, in the prospect of an incorruptible crown, to show forth all diligence in duty, and to abstain from every forbidden gratification, when the racers of Greece would submit to so many privations, and endure so many toils for a crown of laurels which was so soon to fade away?

'Students of divinity are not only Christians, and expectants of an immortal crown, but they hope, through the Divine mercy, to be the happy instruments of turning some of their fellow-men to righteousness, that they may shine for ever as the brightness of the firmament. With what unwearied diligence, then, should they use all the proper means for obtaining that wisdom and knowledge which will not only lead to their own unspeakable benefit, but fit them for furthering the best present interests, and the eternal salvation of they know not how many of their fellow-men.

'The Spirit of God is the author of every qualification necessary for the ministers of the Gospel. He bestowed extraordinary gifts upon the first preachers of the Divine doctrines; and the world was amazed at the powers conferred on men who had spent the former parts of their lives in constant labours for their subsistence. The present state of the Church does not render such gifts necessary. But it ought not to be forgotten that the gifts of knowledge, wisdom, and whatever else is necessary "to make the man of God perfect,

thoroughly furnished for every good work," must come from the Divine Spirit. These gifts, however, are to be expected or improved in the use of means. None of us are born with utterance or knowledge. The measure of intellectual ability bestowed on different men is very different, but none are beyond the need of improvement; and none ought to expect such inspirations of knowledge as were afforded to the holy men of ancient times. For the very reason that God is the Father of Lights, and the bestower of every good and perfect gift, we ought to be diligent in using the means by which He is wont to confer the blessing. "If thou search for wisdom as silver and hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."

'These talents are not the only or the chief requisites in a faithful minister of the Gospel; and it would be exceedingly sinful in the rulers of the Church to admit persons to the ministry who do not in their conduct exhibit good evidence of their piety: and it would be very sinful in candidates to assume the form of godliness without the power of it. Piety is likewise necessary to give ministers a reasonable prospect of success in the work of the Lord, and to fit them for teaching their hearers by example. It is therefore of high importance for students of divinity, in the *first* place, that they should be true Christians, and walk as becometh Christians; *secondly*, that they should store up in their minds that knowledge which they are, if God will, one day to communicate to others; and *thirdly*, that they should endeavour to acquire a talent for communicating that knowledge to other men. I will give you a few advices on each of these heads.'

He once paused in his lecture in the Hall, and said, 'I wish to propose to you a riddle, and it is this: There is a natural production which is neither animal, vegetable, nor mineral. It has neither length, breadth, nor thickness, and yet is often found to be from two to six feet long. It is frequently alluded to in the Old Testament, and strongly recommended

in the New. Can any of you tell me what that is?' The students were taken by surprise, as such an apostrophe was by no means common with the Professor. Having waited for a few moments, and no answer being forthcoming, he turned round to one of his elders, who had come to hear that day's lecture, and asked him if he could tell. 'Yes,' replied the worthy man, though taken a little aback, 'I think it is "LOVE."' The Doctor was gratified, and the students were somewhat abashed.

The late Rev. Patrick Comrie, of Pennicuick, was, at the Hall, and indeed through life, prone to attic witticisms, which were sometimes transmigrated into rather keen satire. One of the students had delivered a somewhat inflated discourse, in which the following piece of bombast was uttered: 'Sin has broken the back of angels, and cracked the globe to its centre.' The Professor, as usual, before giving his own criticism, asked the students for their remarks. There was, however, no response to the appeal. Dr Lawson had brought that forenoon one of his brethren to the Hall, who was very anxious to hear Mr Comrie's now rather notorious criticisms. Wishing to gratify his reverend visitor, the Professor repeated his request; but still all were silent. At length he turned to Mr Comrie, and requested him to give his mind. He declined at first; but, on being again solicited, he rose in his seat, and simply said, 'Well, sir, I have only to notice one eloquent passage in this discourse. It seemed like a quotation. I know not where he got it; but my remark on that passage is, that it is the first time I ever heard that angels were broken-backed, and that I shudder to contemplate the "crack" of this globe. If that be true, it is high time we were looking out for another planet.' 'Oh, Mr Comrie, Mr Comrie!' was all the reply of the not displeased Professor.

When his son George went to be inducted into the church at Bolton, he gave him a letter to the Rev. George Sandy

(then of Leeds, now of Gorebridge), who was to take a chief part in the interesting service. Mr Sandy had been ordained in Leeds only a few months before. The following extract from that letter bespeaks the interest of the Professor in his quondam pupil:—'Having an opportunity by my son, I hereby express my great satisfaction with your settlement in a place where you will have much opportunity of doing much good to precious souls. You were dilatory in entering on the public service of Christ; but I hope you now find Him a good Master. Doubtless you will meet with discouragements; but I suppose you have heard of the saying of the famous Bernard Gilpin, that "he would not go to a place where the devil would not oppose him." I do not at present subjoin any counsels to you respecting the manner in which you should discharge your duty. If you want information on this subject, let the Apostle Paul be your counsellor. What he wrote to Timothy and to Titus, he has written to us.'

The Professor relished a joke. Dr Dick used to tell, that he entered his library one morning, and found him with a broken pipe in his hand. 'It is a common remark,' he said, smiling, 'that calamities seldom come single; and I have had a proof of that this morning. Some time ago I broke a pipe, and now, you see, I have broken another.'

In his lectures in the Hall, he illustrated the relative duties chiefly from the Book of Proverbs; and, referring to the 22d verse of the 18th chapter—'Whoso findeth a wife, findeth a good thing'—he observed, 'Surely Solomon here means a *good* wife, for many a man takes a viper into his bosom.'

One of the students happened to mention, in conversation with the Professor, that he had been present in a Roman Catholic chapel, when the priest, among other things, observed, 'Protestants blame us for worshipping angels; but John prays (Rev. i. 4, 5) for grace and peace to the seven churches of Asia, from the seven spirits or angels which are

before the throne, even before he prays for them from Jesus Christ Himself;' when Dr Lawson replied, 'I should consider that a very good reason for believing that *created* spirits cannot be meant in that text.'

One day, when it was the late Dr John Brown's turn to pray in the Hall, he had used the words—'that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, *that is, the devil.*' As they were walking home, Dr Lawson reproved him, saying, 'John, my man, you need not have said, "that is, the devil." You might have been sure God knew whom you meant.'

The Doctor was peculiarly attentive to his students in affliction. One of them—Mr Moodie, from Greenock, a very amiable and excellent youth—was attacked with what turned out a fatal disease. Dr Lawson wrote him a letter, which he prized above gold. He kept it constantly beside him, and died with it under his pillow. Another student of great promise—Mr Marr, brother of the late Mr Marr, of Lothian Road Church, Edinburgh—was present one evening at a tea-party, in the house of the late Dr Anderson, where he was suddenly seized, and lost the power of the lower extremities. He left Selkirk the following day, and Dr Lawson provided him with a letter of introduction to the late eminent Dr Gregory, of Edinburgh University. It was soon decided to be an incurable case, when he received from his tutor a letter of Christian sympathy, which was a source of great comfort to him on his death-bed.

The Professor was extremely susceptible of cold. On calling for him, he was usually found sitting near to the fire, with a book in his hand, and a pipe in his mouth. 'Will you join me in a smoke?' was his usual salutation. As the weather was rather cold during some of the sessions of the Hall, he was obliged to meet the students, not in the church as usual, but in an upper room in the manse. The room was not large enough; and some of the students had to sit in the

lobby, where they could hear, though they did not see him. Some of them occasionally found their way into his library, which was adjacent, where they took a peep into the books. At one time there happened to be a book-stall in Selkirk, and one of the students discovered a few of Dr Lawson's books—his name being erazed from them. It turned out that they had been pilfered by one of the students, of the name of Sutherland. He was confronted with the Professor, who, after the theft was proven, proposed that the young man should pray for repentance and pardon. 'Pray yourself,' said the thief; and, accordingly, the Doctor offered up an earnest and affectionate prayer for him. The student was allowed to go free. He left Selkirk, and has never been heard of since.

The subject of one of the students' discussions happened to be Heb. xi. 31. In speaking of the faith of Rahab, he stated, that whatever might be the fate of the heathen, wherever Divine revelation was enjoyed, faith was indispensable to salvation. Upon this, the Professor remarked, that the student might have expressed himself more strongly as to the hopeless state of the heathen; and added, 'But it is an awful subject; and, perhaps, the young man did right in leaving the point undetermined.'

He, one day, entered the Hall with Paine's 'Rights of Man' in his hand, and said, 'Here is a book which belongs to the Students' Library. I took it out when it was prohibited by Government; but I think it may now be restored, without any offence being taken.'

He usually prayed in the standing posture, and always briefly. He stood, covered with his plaid, always worn; and, with a hand in each vest pocket, solemnly poured out his soul before God.

In his lectures, he often quoted merely the chapter and the verse, without repeating the words. 'I do not quote the words,' he would say, 'trusting that you remember them.'

It happened that, in a few instances, students left his tuition, and connected themselves with other religious parties. In none of these cases, however, did he discover any irritation, or the slightest solicitude either about the good report or the bad report which they carried away. His wish was, that the Lord might lead them in His truth, and teach them. The counsel he suggested from it to others was, 'Prove all things; hold fast that which is good:' and the influence which he wished it to have upon himself and others, was alluded to in the words of the Apostle Paul, 'Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule; let us mind the same thing.'

In Selkirk, there was an excellent lady of the name of Mrs Johnstone—the students used to call her 'Mother Johnstone.' She sent one day for Mr Adam (late of Peebles), and said, 'Mr Adam, I am to have at tea to-night, the Doctor and Mrs Lawson, and Mr Greig of Lochgelly, and young Alexander Waugh; will you come too?' He replied, 'With the greatest pleasure, though unworthy of such an honour.' He went; and a more instructive and interesting evening he never spent. At one period the conversation turned upon this question: 'Have soldiers a right to judge of the expediency of a war?' The Doctor and Mr Greig were pitted against each other in the debate—both venerable for age, eminent in piety, skilled in Bible truth, in Divine and human literature, and versant with men and manners. In their arguments they both manifested great pleasantry, and issued fine morsels of rare wit. Both of them seemed to wax young again, and were actually suiting the action to the word. Mr Waugh (son of Dr Waugh, and afterwards of Mile End Chapel, London) sat in silent but interested amazement; while the two old ladies, Mrs Lawson and Mother Johnstone, occasionally put in a word, to try, if possible, to terminate the dispute. It was evident that, had their vote been taken, they would have sided with the Professor. In

winding up, he said, 'I think decidedly, that soldiers may inform themselves as to the object of any war in which they engage. There are, however, so many diplomatic circumstances involved in wars, as to unfit them for arriving at a proper decision; they are, therefore, bound to act upon the belief that, for king and country, their superiors are right.' To which Mr Greig replied: 'In that case, soldiers are mere machines, and cannot be held as in any sense or degree responsible.' During the little debate, the Doctor's eye sparkled, and on his aged face sat a kind of heroic smile. Mr Greig, too, seemed greatly pleased, and even willing to be on the losing side. Perhaps, in the humility of his heart—for he was a most worthy man—he wished, for the sake of the young men who were present, that the Professor should stand highest in their estimation.

Every session Mr Adam went up to the Hall he called on the Professor, who, on one occasion, thus addressed him: 'Come away, Mr Adam, yours is an ancient name, and reminds me of a story about an Englishman and an old Scotch minister. The minister was a plain, blunt man, and saw that the other was not particularly well informed on religious subjects: "Can you tell me," said he, "who was the first man?" "Really," replied the Englishman," "I cannot, but will be obliged to you if you will inform me." "It was *Adam*," said the minister; and asked if he could tell the name of the first woman. "Certainly," was the reply, "it would be Mrs Adam."' This shows that the Doctor, with all his gravity and deep thinking, could be jocose, and, on befitting occasions, quite familiar with his students.

'Perhaps Dr Lawson's mind did occasionally, and unknown to himself, go off at a tangent, though he was not the absent man he is sometimes represented to have been. Having given several successive lectures on "*Pride*," he called upon so many of the students to take their places on a specified seat for examination. I do not remember what suggested it to me,

but, by way of experiment to see what he would do or say, it occurred to me to advert to one aspect of the subject to which he had made no reference. When it came to Mr Adam's turn, the question he put was, "Can you, Mr Adam, give me any other aspect of pride?" "Yes, sir," replied he, "the Papal hierarchy." He awoke, as it were, out of a dream, acquiesced emphatically in the reply, to the amazement, if not amusement of the class, and went on in a more than usually animated manner to illustrate the topic.

'During one session of the Hall, the students had held a special meeting for the purpose of considering how they might best improve the solemn event of any of their number dying during the recess. A resolution was agreed to, that the student best acquainted with the deceased brother should be appointed to improve the event by some memorial. Before going into the measure, however, it was thought to be right to consult the Professor. A deputation for this purpose waited upon him, consisting of the late Rev. John M'Gilchrist, of Edinburgh; the late Rev. Dr Brown, of Greenock; and the Rev. T. Adam, of Peebles. When the object of their call had been stated, the Professor said—

'"I am just afraid that one student, in drawing up a memoir of a deceased fellow-student, will be apt to exceed in eulogistic references."

'"But, Doctor," interposed Mrs Lawson, who was present, "you know that all the students have good characters."

'"Ay," said he, "they all fetch up very good testimonials with them."

'This proved an extinguisher to the whole affair.

'On a certain Sabbath, while the Hall was sitting, a very eccentric preacher, though a good man, occupied the Doctor's pulpit. The oddities of the minister were too much for some of the students, who gave way to laughter. On the day following he called upon Dr Lawson, complained of such conduct in young candidates for the ministry, and hoped he

would administer a sharp reproof from the chair. But no. The worthy man, with a peculiar smile, replied, "I am sure that, if the students laughed, they had something to laugh at." There had been some rather ludicrous stammering and repetition of a Scripture passage, so that the Doctor felt some sympathy for his pupils.'

The Professor, it is well known, was not over particular about his dress. His common attire was a blue coat, corduroy knee-breeches, and black stockings, with a checked plaid thrown round his shoulders in cold weather. Sir Walter Scott's 'Cargill' is also represented as careless in the clothing of the outer man; but though indifferent to the *neatness*, he was not so to the '*cleanliness*' of his person and raiment. This holds true of Dr Lawson. His inadvertence, however, in this respect, was sometimes rather teazing to his friends. He came into Edinburgh to attend the Synod, upon one occasion, and was met on the street by Dr Husband. The latter, being particular as to dress, was vexed to see his friend wearing a 'shocking bad hat,' and used the liberty to call the Professor's attention to it. Dr Husband exercised well-known influence over Dr Lawson, who at all times paid great respect to his opinions and judgment. 'What is wrong with the hat?' asked Dr Lawson. Dr Husband told him that it was old and shabby, and unlike him, and discoursed briefly upon the Christian duty of men in his station setting an example of external decency in such things. The affair ended by the two going at once into a hat shop, when the old gave way to a new *chapeau*.

He wore a yellow wig. When 'powdering' the wig became fashionable, Mrs Lawson thought that his should be conformed, and, without telling him of it—for he never would have given his consent—she did powder it one Sabbath morning before he left for the pulpit. He put it on without noticing the improvement. The day was very warm, and in the midst of his sermon he was disturbed by the perspiration

drops on his face, rendered more than usually disagreeable by their mixture with the powder. After several applications of his handkerchief to his brow, nose, and eyes, he at length took off the wig, and seeing it all over with what he thought was dust, he deliberately knocked it on the sides of the pulpit, and shook out the powder thereof; and having again put it on, resumed his discourse.

He appeared in the Hall one day with his wig somewhat *touzy* and to the side. A student whispered to his neighbour, 'See, his wig is no *redd* the day.' The Doctor heard, but took no notice of it at the time. But when it came to the turn of this student to deliver a discourse, he was welcomed to the pulpit with these words from the Professor, 'Come away, Mr ——, and we'll now see wha's wig is best redd the day.' The student was taken by surprise, but proceeded, and got the approbation of his placid tutor. He could be severe when it was necessary, but in general he was exceedingly tolerant.

He was in the habit of reading Hebrew every Friday with the students. On one Friday he found the Hall almost deserted; and on inquiry, he was told that nearly all the students had set off for a walk up the Ettrick. He made no reply, but simply caused the roll to be called, and then went home. Next Friday there was not a student absent who could be present. Such was the effect of his quiet mode of rebuking them. His gentleness became his authority. If he could, he always did account favourably for any mistake in a student's performance. Tender to their infirmities, he sought to advance, never to repel and reject them. Thus, when upon a visit to Edinburgh, he heard that the Presbytery was sitting. On discharging his own business, he went to the Presbytery House. He found that one of his students was there, and on trials for license. This student was not a bright light, and, in addition, had some natural defect which Dr Peddie thought might interfere with his usefulness. He

was just concluding when the Professor entered and took his seat. 'I have just one remark more,' he said, 'and shall then give way to Dr Lawson, whose opinion, we know, is worth having: everything that was offered to God, under the law, was to be without spot and without blemish.' 'What Dr Peddie has said,' replied the Professor, 'is quite true, that everything offered unto God, under the law, was to be without spot and without blemish; but he ought to have gone further, and added, that there has been a change of the law and also of the priesthood.'

'It is amazing,' writes one of his students, 'with what reverential interest those who studied under him look back upon that period of their existence. I was preaching the other Sabbath in Perth. Dr Newlands heard of it, and sent for me. He was dying. The note was written by his wife, and signed by himself, but evidently in a very tremulous hand. When I called, he was too weak to be able to rise, and suffering great pain; yet even in these circumstances all his conversation was about the great and good Dr Lawson. "Do you remember," he asked, "what he said to me when you and I absented ourselves from the Hall without leave for two days, during which I got myself hurt by a fall at Newtown?" Of course I did. "Ay," he added, "when I went to apologize, the good man said to me, 'If you had not got yourself hurt, perhaps I might have expressed myself otherwise, but I think you have got punishment enough.' Every morning after that, he calmly, and without assigning a reason for it, 'called the roll,' while you and I deeply felt what that reason was. A look from that man was enough at any time to arrest frivolity."'

This beautiful and ardent love wherewith all his students loved him, is one of the most interesting features in his professorial life. How is it to be accounted for? It is seldom that we find such greatness encompassed and adorned with such feminine tenderness. The secret lay in the transparent

unselfishness of all he said or did. He was so wrapped up in his subject, or in his work, as to be evidently self-oblivious. He lost sight of self entirely, and became absorbed in the excellence of his theme, and in a passionate desire to make it effective.

Dr Simpson has noticed a very remarkable trait in his tutor's character—his unconsciousness of his own superiority. While all around him wondered at the fertility of his mind and the profundity of his wisdom, he not only seemed to be, but was really, not only quite innocent of any vain estimate of his powers, but of any idea that he was different from other folks. At first view this is almost incredible. A man so accomplished, we are wont to assume, could not fail to be conscious of his acquirements, though not conceited of them. It appears, however, that he was an exception. So, at all events, all who knew him intimately testify. And, after all, it is to be accounted for. He got his learning without effort. He was master of his position by natural and easy ascents. Hence he looked upon his possessions with no self-complacent eye. The overweening estimate some have of their own talents or successes, arises, in a great measure, from the hard labour and formidable difficulties they have had to encounter on the road. On reaching at length the summit, they are to be excused if they survey their elevation with pride. But George Lawson seemed to go up, or down, and over the ground, as with seven-leagued boots: his capacious memory and his sagacious judgment kept his mind always high, so that his steps were from the top of one alp to another, without the fatigue and waste of rugged ascents and descents. *He* never *felt* that he had accomplished a feat, whatever might be the impression his feats did produce upon others. His own thinking was all about the subject itself, while their thinking was intensified upon the speaker.

In the memoir of Dr Brown there is a reference to an event in his Hall life, exceedingly creditable both to himself and the

Professor. The student had just delivered a discourse from these words, 'This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God.' A passion for literature was then displaying itself, and young Brown had come so far under its influence as to admit more of the metaphysical than the evangelical into his sermon, than at that time, at least, was considered consistent with faithfulness. After several of the students had animadverted somewhat bitterly upon it, the Rev. Mr Greig, of Lochgelly, who was on a visit to the Professor, took the preacher very severely to task, and pronounced a decided verdict against his performance. Dr Lawson said very little, but in general coincided with Mr Greig's criticism. He sent, however, on the evening of the same day, for his young pupil, amiably desirous to soothe his feelings under the circumstances. 'Come away, John,' he said, as the lad entered the library, 'and tell me how you feel after this forenoon's work. I hope you are not offended with Mr Greig; you know what a good and wise man he is.' 'I have such a regard for Mr Greig,' said John, 'that I believe I have deserved all I got.' 'Yes,' rejoined Dr Lawson, 'I fear you have; and if I had gone into criticism I might have been even more severe than he was; but, John, we have both good reason to look well to our work, for if you come short in anything, every one will say, how much better you would have turned out had you studied under your grandfather.' The student avowed that his faults could never be ascribed to his teacher; and having promised to be more careful in future, the affair ended.[1] The friendship and confidence of his Professor, Dr Brown afterwards largely shared in. He was delighted, and even elevated, with the growing and rising worth of this honoured grandson of the Haddington divine. And very markedly so, when, on the death of Mrs Brown, such a mellowed and holy change came over his entire life, personal, pastoral, and literary. He often spoke of it, and never without

[1] *Vide* Dr Cairns' Life, pp. 46, 47.

expressing his confidence that in future years this 'corn of wheat' should bring forth rich and abundant fruit. A very good anecdote, in its way, is told in his memoir. 'He was once called to preach at Selkirk during the sitting of the Hall, some six or seven years after his settlement in Biggar. The assembled students expected, from his text—"I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh"—that he would enter deeply into the conflicting views taken of the difficult passage, and elaborately decide between them. He surprised and perhaps disappointed his audience, by a rapid statement of his results, and a lengthened practical improvement of the subject. He gained, however, from Dr Lawson the pithy encomium, "Mr John, you have, I am glad to see, a way of getting at the kernel, without breaking your teeth upon the shell."'

CHAPTER VII.

THE PROFESSOR AND HIS STUDENTS.

The Selkirk students are remarkable for being all of one and the same mind about their Professor. Whatever else they might dispute about, and whatever others might think, Dr Lawson, in their estimation, had no superior, not even an equal. With every allowance for partiality, few seem to call their judgment in question. The best proof that they were quite sincere in all this, is to be seen in the affectionate earnestness with which they have drunk into his spirit and tried to follow in his footsteps. Many interesting and graphic accounts of his life and learning have they given us; but, after all, they admit that it is impossible to do anything like justice to the theme. 'His appearance was peculiarly striking,' one of them writes,[1] 'you might imagine yourself in company with one of the ancient sages or patriarchs,—his dress so plain, without being in the least vulgar; his voice so hollow, yet positively melodious; his language scholarly; his sentiments full of grace, wisdom, and truth. He seemed to intermeddle with all knowledge, assisted by a memory proverbially great, and an intellect at once prompt, clear, and accurate. Withal, he was the humblest of men.' Such is the strain in which his pupils write or speak of him. We are about to show that persons in other and higher stations were similarly impressed; and that the man who secured the love of the lowly, could also command the respect of the highest in the land. It had pleased the Almighty Disposer of events to disappoint the nation's hopes

[1] The Rev. James M'Whirter.

in the death of the Princess Charlotte and her infant. To alleviate, if not to banish, the sorrows of the royal widower, Prince Leopold had been recommended to travel. He came to Scotland, and visited Sir Walter Scott at Abbotsford. It was upon this occasion that the celebrated interview took place between the Prince (now the King of Belgium) and the Sage of Ettrick. This is emphatically a Hall story, and must be told.

When it was rumoured that the Prince was likely to pass through Selkirk, the excitement was great, and great were the preparations for giving to him a right royal reception. The magistrates and the neighbouring gentry resolved to go forth and present to him an address of condolence. The Divinity Hall was in session at the time, and an invitation was sent to the Professor and his students to join the procession. The invitation came upon the Doctor somewhat unexpectedly, so that it was with some difficulty that he got himself appropriately rigged out. He afterwards confessed, that if he had got longer warning he might have been better attired. To confront royalty was to him an absolutely new and unthought of casualty. The day came, and the procession moved past the Prince, with Dr Lawson and his students in the midst. The Prince noticed them, and said to Sir Walter Scott, 'What long black line of young men is that? have they put on mourning in compliment to my loss?' Sir Walter informed him who they were, and called his especial attention to the tall, thin, and now stooping figure of the Professor at their head, telling him how great, and good, and learned a man he was. The Prince, on entering the Council Chambers, requested that Dr Lawson should be presented to him. Nothing disconcerted, the venerable Professor walked up to the Prince, who, after the ceremony of introduction was over, expressed his gratification at seeing him; whereupon the Doctor, in the simplest but most affecting manner, offered his condolence, and concluded with the following graceful

compliment,—a compliment of which it has been well said, that, 'compared with the idle and fulsome flatteries so common in the presence of the great, it is most dignified and becoming, indicating not the spirit or the policy of the sycophant, but the holy kindness and the due respect of a man of God:'—

'I am happy to have had an interview with your Royal Highness, not only on your own account and your connection with the Princess Charlotte, but especially because of your alliance with the Electoral House of Saxony, and your descent from ancestors who made so many invaluable sacrifices in defence and propagation of the Protestant faith. To them, Luther, in the hour of his need, was much beholden for protection and assistance.' The Prince was greatly pleased, and, turning round to Sir Walter, said, 'Since I came to Scotland I have received many compliments on account of the Princess, but this is the first I have received on my own account and that of my ancestors.'

Writing afterwards to a friend, who had expressed a wish to hear his own account of what transpired during this interview, Dr Lawson says:—

'I entertain a high respect for Prince Leopold, as the descendant of princes to whom the Protestant part of the world is so much indebted. He appears to possess a degree of condescension and affability not very common in his high rank. Besides what you read in the papers, he asked me my age; and when I told him what it was, he complimented me on the health which I seemed to enjoy. Part of my answer was, that one may enjoy as much comfort in old age as in youth, if he is a fearer of God. But my dulness of hearing unfitted me for much conversation with him. We esteemed ourselves honoured when we were admitted to the converse of earthly princes, who are creatures of the dust like ourselves. Why have we not a profounder sense of our obligations to the everlasting God, who allows us to come to

Him, even to His mercy-seat? O that we could approach to Him, at all times, with the reverence and the confidence which are due to His greatness and His mercy!'

But the entire of this interesting incident is so simply and truthfully told in the following letter from an eye-witness of the whole scene, that we give way to it, differing though it does slightly from the version which we have received as authentic:—

'SELKIRK, 25*th Sept.* 1819.

'DEAR SIR,— . . . . Prince Leopold arrived here yesterday, on his way home, and was escorted into the town by the Magistrates, the Town Council, *students*, and trades. The students had previously been invited by the Magistrates to grace the procession, and they did so in a very excellent manner indeed. The company met his Highness at the Bridge; and the populace, with the Prince's permission, loosed the horses from the carriage, and drew him into the town. We walked in the following order:—First, the town officers, in livery, with band of music. Next, the tradesmen of the town, all ranged under their respective banners, among which was the famous standard won by the Sutors of Selkirk, at the battle of Flodden Field, in 1513, which particularly took the Prince's attention. After the tradesmen marched the students, two and two, according to their order on the roll. Last of all came the Magistrates, with the Merchant Company and Council. His Highness was accompanied by Sir R. Gardner, and was followed by Walter Scott, Esq., the poet, and Sheriff of the county. The procession formed a sort of circle in the market-place, and the Prince, as he passed round, bowed respectfully to each. After being publicly presented with the freedom of the burgh, at the cross, and with the usual forms, he was conducted to the Council Chambers, amid the cheers and acclamations of the multitude.

'But, what is best of all, our revered Professor had come out, and had mingled with the crowd, to get a quiet look of the Prince. This being intimated to one of the Magistrates, he was instantly sent for; and, after a little treating, he was introduced to his Royal Highness. After mutual salutations, the Prince asked him how old he was. The Doctor replied, "I am more than threescore years and ten;" whereupon the Prince said, that "he looked rather fresh for his age." The Doctor said, that "he enjoyed tolerably good health, but was weighed down under infirmities." The Prince then asked if "he was the head of the Church in this part of the country." Doctor Lawson replied, "I am the minister of the Associate Burgher Congregation in this town, and I am also a Professor in a theological seminary." It was then remarked by some one, that the young gentlemen, with whose appearance the Prince had expressed himself so highly pleased, were the Doctor's pupils; and then Mr Scott gave him some hints as to the character, etc., of their tutor.

'The Prince then immediately addressed the Doctor thus: "Such a man as you need not be afraid of the infirmities of age, nor of any earthly calamity. God is your friend and protector." To which our venerable Professor thus replied: "Please your Royal Highness, I have long had a wish to see you, on your own account, and still more so on account of your illustrious ancestors, Frederic and John, who so warmly defended the Reformation, and suffered so much in protecting Luther. On this account, I have a greater regard for your family than for any other of the Princes of Germany." To which the Prince rejoined: "Reverend Doctor, I sincerely thank you for the high compliment you have just now paid me. Such a compliment I have never received before. I am proud to think it is a just one. My ancestors were all zealous Protestants, and I can assure you, so am I, Doctor."

'They then shook hands most cordially, and seemed equally well pleased with the interview; upon which Walter Scott

said to one of the company near him, "You see Dr Lawson has done better than us all, and got beyond us all in favour." The Prince then set off on his journey. A very handsome letter was afterwards sent by the Magistrates to the Hall, expressing their high appreciation and sincere thanks to us for the manner in which we had conducted ourselves; and then a deputation was sent from us to wait upon the Magistrates to express to them our sense of gratitude, and to confer with them on the propriety of inserting in the public prints an account of the procession, and of Dr Lawson's interview with the Prince. The members of this deputation from the Hall were all presented with the freedom of the royal burgh, and received burgess tickets in the usual forms. The Magistrates did this in order to express the high regard which they entertained for our Professor and the theological seminary over which he presides.'

Some time after Dr Lawson died, a copy of the funeral sermon was sent to the King of the Belgians, which his Majesty acknowledged in the most kindly terms, and affixed to his letter the seal-royal of the kingdom. This interesting document cannot now be found. In the good providence of God, this King still lives,—the uncle of our own sovereign. He is placed on the throne of a Roman Catholic country, and his Protestantism has been subjected to a severe trial. There is every reason to believe, however, that he has continued true to the prestige of his ancestry. In the whole of his most interesting interview with Professor Lawson, there is a dash of the patriarchal,—reminding us of a similar scene in that ancient sacred drama, where, within the palace of the Pharaohs, the aged Jacob tells his age to the monarch; only in this, the modern one, we have royalty to us more interestingly represented, and patriarchy not less devout, but more radiant with the light of the cross and the wisdom of the learned.

It was seldom that the sober routine of the Hall was disturbed by such incidents as the foregoing. As a general rule, the Professor was allowed to go through the sessions with his students, without any other excitement than what was occasioned by the visits now and then of his ministerial friends. It was otherwise, however, in the session of 1801. The well-known Dr Mason, of New York, arrived at Selkirk, and obtained the Professor's permission to address the students, and otherwise use his influence to prevail upon them to emigrate to North America. The late Dr Thomson, of Coldstream, gives an account of this visit, in a letter which he wrote immediately after the session to his brother, the Rev. Peter Thomson, of Whitby. An extract will be read with interest, not only from its references to Dr Mason's visit, but as revealing somewhat of the Hall-life at Selkirk:—'Towards the end of the session (he writes), a Mr Mason came to Selkirk, with a view to engage some of the students to go as preachers to America. He himself is minister of the Associate Congregation of New York. He preached once at Selkirk; and even in a single discourse, discovered such fervency of zeal, such soundness of understanding, and such eloquence of language, as are seldom united in any preacher. No less than about sixteen congregations, he informed us, were ready for ministers—all of them superior to the generality in this country. Even in a temporal point of view, if such a view is to be taken into consideration, they are far preferable. Mr Mason's stipend —and he wants an assistant—is said to be L.400. He was exceedingly solicitous to engage some of the students to accompany him, or at least to follow him over the Atlantic. He wrote a very pressing letter to the Professor, which was read to us the last time he was in the Hall; but he thought it prudent to withdraw during the reading of it. He previously, however, after paying some compliments to the Professor and the students, observed, that he was much

mistaken if he should find none among us who would comply with his invitation; and, continued he, "if I get none, I can only say, that it will leave a pang in my bosom that will thrill every nerve in my frame, and vibrate to the very heart of the churches I represent." He leaves this country soon, accompanied by Mr James Paterson, the only one, it seems, upon whom he could prevail. The Synod, it is expected, will, at their next meeting, do something in this business. None are wanted, but such as have attended four sessions at the Hall. I spoke of going both to Mr Mason and the Professor. I, however, mentioned an objection which, I am afraid, is an insurmountable one,—the circumstance of my being lame, and therefore unfit for the necessary fatigue. Mr Mason thought this of no great moment; and the Professor, having told me that "he did not know me to be lame," observed that I had time enough to think about it. It has since been said, and was even told in the Presbytery, that Mr Mason wanted me for his helper. This I believe to be a vague report. It owes its rise, I suppose, to the following circumstance, which had been mentioned by some of the students. The *critics* had been so much impressed by a sense of Mr Mason's superior genius, that they seemed resolved to be mute during his stay. The first who delivered in his hearing, were Messrs Wilson and Paterson. Previous to the criticisms on them, two private discourses were delivered; but neither "the honour of the Hall" (a phrase then in the mouth of every one) nor the Professor's anxiety could extort any remark. After a few observations, therefore, from himself, the private discourses were dismissed, and Messrs Wilson's and Paterson's taken into consideration. Again, we were all called upon, and again we all refused to rise. Some of the students then called out to me; and the Professor repeated his request that I should make a few observations. The superior abilities of the two preachers, the excellence of their discourses, the small number and trifling nature of my remarks, and the pre-

sence of Mr Mason, determined me, when I went into the Hall, to sit still. I was now, however, under a sort of necessity to say what I could, not so much for the value of my remarks themselves, as from the manner in which they were extorted. At once by the students and the Professor, and from other little accidents, which it is needless to mention, I had gained a little credit, it is likely, in the eyes of the American; and I have some chance of his patronage, if I should at any future period think of going near his residence.'

Dr Mason's letter to the Professor was afterwards laid before the committee of Synod, who had been appointed to meet and 'converse with him, and transact with him as they shall see cause.' The following was their finding:—'The committee, after deliberating upon the subject, were unanimously of opinion, that the object is of such magnitude for the interests of the Gospel, that they ought to co-operate with Mr Mason by all the means in their power. They agreed, therefore, to order this minute of their proceedings to be printed, and to send copies of it to every Presbytery; 2dly, to every minister of the Synod; 3dly, to every probationer; and, 4thly, to all the students of divinity of the third, fourth, and fifth year's standing: at the same time recommending it to them to take the subject into their serious consideration; and requesting such of them as, after deliberation, may be inclined to obey the call of Providence, by going to preach the Gospel in the United States of North America, under the inspection of the Associate Reformed Synod, to correspond on the subject, either with the president or clerk of the committee.' This minute was signed by 'James Hall, preses; and James Peddie, clerk.' Though, in after years, not a few of the ministers and probationers of the Secession Churches in Scotland emigrated to the States of America, and to Canada, and to Nova Scotia, the present appeal was not very successful. The late Dr Hay, at one time, contemplated a favourable response to Mr Mason's appeal; but the call to

Kinross determined him to abide at home. It is pleasing to reflect, that since, hundreds of Scotchmen have crossed the Atlantic, and are now to be found, in all parts of America, foremost among the Christian teachers of that vast and interesting continent.

Dr Lawson had the honour of being theological tutor to some of the most distinguished scholars and divines of the last half century. Not to mention any of the living, we may refer to a few of his deceased students, between whom and himself there existed an attachment and esteem alike honourable to both parties. The Selkirk ministers are fast passing away, and soon not one of them shall remain. It will be long, however, before the memories of some of them fade from amongst us. Notice has been already taken of Dr Kidston and Dr Brown. In his correspondence with the former, there were the most evident marks of unusual friendship. Never could a Professor be more genuinely loved than he was by his Glasgow pupil. His name was often upon Dr Kidston's lips, and many were the beautiful and characteristic anecdotes which, especially in his old age, he delighted to rehearse regarding him. Their intercourse, however, seemed to have been chiefly that of a father with a son. As a son Dr Kidston ever looked up to him, eagerly sought after and acted upon his counsels, and ever regarded his name and memory with singular reverence. To have denied him the satisfaction, we may say the luxury, of thinking and conversing about Dr Lawson, would have been to deprive him of one of his greatest earthly enjoyments. On the other hand, Dr Brown's intercourse with the Professor was considerably marked by those traits which distinguish the correspondence of scholars or enthusiasts in letters and philosophy. Their epistolary fellowship was confined to the latter years of Dr Lawson, and was not so ample as it must have been had they been longer spared together. As it is, it is much to be regretted that stray letters only remain. A few of

these have been already given, and to them we add the following, in the first of which the Edinburgh divine (then at Biggar) reveals to the son the reverence he had for the father; in the second, the father announces a daughter's death; and in the third we have Dr Brown's sympathy with the father in that bereavement:—

Dr Brown to Mr Lawson, Junr.

'BIGGAR, 21*st Sept.* 1812.

'MY DEAR SIR,—Along with this you will receive your brother's copy of Mr Paterson's sonnets, which I have but too long kept from him. The true cause of the delay was my disinclination to a task he had assigned me, that of adding to the beautiful verses of my friend a few of my own rhymes. It seemed to me something like the Asiatic cruelty of binding a dead carcass to a living body. It was his will, however, and I believe my promise; so at last it is done. When you write Mr George, offer him my best regards, along with those of Mrs Brown, and our united wishes for every blessing to Mrs Lawson and her young family. Remember me most kindly and respectfully to my venerated preceptor, your father, to your mother, and all the family. Accept, my dear sir, of my best wishes for yourself. May a Divine blessing rest on your studies, and may you, in due time, equal and even excel your brother, and even your father, as an able, useful, honourable minister.—I am, my dear Sir, yours truly, 'JOHN BROWN.'

Dr Lawson to Dr Brown.

'SELKIRK, 13*th August* 1816.

'DEAR SIR,—I thank you for your sermon, which seems to have been sent by Providence to prepare us for a very painful dispensation which God has seen needful to inflict upon us—the loss of a daughter very dear to us. In her natural disposition she very much resembles what I have

heard of your beloved consort, and I make no doubt that she resembled her too in qualities of more importance. But she had not time and calls of Providence to give the same abundant proofs of the grace given to her. None, however, who had much knowledge of her, are disposed to be uneasy in their thoughts of the period put to her space of preparation.

'Your loss is very great, and I am happy that you have been able to bear it in a manner so much becoming a Christian and a minister of Christ, and to make so good use of it for the advantage of others. I am persuaded that, in the day when the mystery of Providence with respect to you is finished, your loss will be found to have been far more than compensated to yourself, beside the pleasure which it will give you to find the happy influence it has directly or indirectly had upon those who will be to you a joy and crown.

'Nor am I without hope that both I and my family, and many others, will derive considerable advantage from the event, which I cannot but deplore at present. If I am not flattered by some of my friends, the departure of my beloved daughter from this world is very deeply felt by all who knew her. Her memory is blessed, and the remembrance of her virtues will not be useless.

'There is joy in grief. The stroke that has bereaved me of a large portion of my earthly treasure, has, I hope, consummated the felicity of my beloved child.

'It was a wonderful instance of fortitude and patient submission to the will of God in David, that he recovered the tranquillity of his soul, and could write new songs of praise to God, after the loss of Amnon and Absalom. You and I have reason to bless God that we have so much reason to look back with pleasure on the lives of those whose deaths we deplore. I thank God that I once had those children who are now gone before me to a place from whence they will not return. I rejoice in the happiness enjoyed by such of them as lived long enough to use their reasoning faculty.

It gives me pleasure to think of the virtues which they discovered, and the pleasure they wished to give, and not without success, to their parents, and to others around them. They were innocent and happy when they were with me; and now, I trust, they are far happier than ever, and that if I am not a cast-away (which God forbid), after teaching them the way of life, I have yet boundless stores of happiness reserved for me in their society.

'I have reason to think, from your letter and sermon, that my feelings are not unlike your own. May the Lord spare to us those relations that are left, and dispose them always so to behave as to leave no ground for dismal apprehensions concerning them, if they should be taken from us; and may He preserve us from any omission or commission which may give us just pain when we are bereaved of them whom we love. I believe that self-reflection for omissions in such cases are very difficultly prevented, and sometimes they may be very troublesome when there is not much ground for them. I think I have observed, as one great instance of Divine goodness, that Providence has frequently by other means supplied our lack of service, when we have not done every-thing that we might have done for those to whom we can now perform no more offices of kindness.—Yours sincerely, 'G. Lawson.'

Dr Brown to Dr Lawson.

'Biggar, 19*th August* 1816.

'My dear Sir,—Your highly valued letter, containing the mournful intelligence of your daughter's departure into the world of spirits, reached me this afternoon. It found me not altogether unprepared for the tidings it brought, as I had learned from my brother, Dr Nimmo, who had seen Miss Jean on her way to Liverpool, that there was but little probability of her recovery. I would be guilty of a violation of the law both of justice and of love of no ordinary magnitude, did I not cordially sympathize with you in this affliction. I have

no doubt that He who has imposed the heavy load will enable you cheerfully to bear it; and will, by a process to us very imperfectly known in the present state, render this apparent evil abundantly productive of real permanent good. To be in any measure His instrument in suggesting to your mind tranquillizing or consoling thoughts, is an honour to which I dare scarcely aspire; but should *He* who often employs very feeble means to gain His ends, bless anything I have written for this purpose, I shall, I hope, be sincerely grateful. I owe you much; and it would be a gratifying thought, that I had been of some use to one who has been of so much use to me.

'The young man who delivers this note is a Mr William Johnstone, a brother of Mr Ebenezer Johnstone. He is a member of my congregation, and is a good scholar, and, I hope, truly pious. He has been examined by our Presbytery, and recommended by them to your care. As Mr Harper has not forwarded him a certificate of his recommendation, I thought it necessary to state this fact. Probably the certificate will be sent up by some of the other students from our Presbytery. It may also be proper to notice that the Presbytery assigned to him Matthew i. 21 as a subject for a homily. I hope to have the satisfaction of seeing you in the course of little more than a fortnight. Mrs Nimmo, who is an unspeakable advantage and comfort to me, unites with me in every kind wish for you, Mrs Lawson, and the family. By the mercy of a good Providence, my dear infants are well. I need not, I believe, solicit for them and myself an interest in your prayers.—I am, Rev. and dear Sir, with much esteem and affection, your deeply obliged pupil, 'JOHN BROWN.'

This sympathy was reciprocated; for when the manse at Biggar was suddenly bereft of its light and ornament, in the death of Mrs Brown, the old man at Selkirk was afflicted in his pupil's affliction, and poured out as sweet 'oil of joy' as ever soothed a heavy spirit.

Dr Brown to Dr Lawson.

'My dear Sir,—It is probable that, ere this time, public rumour will have informed you of the severe affliction which an all-wise Providence has thought fit to lay on me, in the loss of my highly valuable and highly valued wife. I write you not to solicit your sympathy and prayers, for I am persuaded myself these would be yielded without solicitation, but to request you to drop me a few lines at your leisure, which by the blessing of God may be useful in supporting and comforting my bereaved mother-in-law and myself. I earnestly wish not to complain, for I know I have no ground of complaint. I would fain be thankful, for I have unnumbered, innumerable causes of gratitude. The cup I have had to drink is a very bitter one, but infinite wisdom, and, I trust, also infinite kindness, mingled the ingredients. There has been a large infusion of mercy, and I hope the medicine will prove efficacious. I have great cause to be grateful that I ever had such a wife; and though she is no more mine as she once was, I have not lost my interest in her. She is gone, I trust, to her first and better Husband. In faith, humility, and patience, may I be enabled to follow her.

'I some time ago requested my friend, Mr D. Brown, to forward you a copy of my discourse. I am deeply indebted to you for your steady support of the *Repository*. I look forward with very agreeable feelings to an interview of a good few days with you; but I must not be sanguine—we know not what a day may bring forth. With kind compliments to Mrs Lawson and the rest of your family,—I am, yours very truly, 'John Brown.'

Dr Lawson to Dr Brown.

'Selkirk, 5*th June* 1815.

'Dear Friend,—I have been so long in returning you my thanks for the late valuable present you sent me, that it

would now be very unseasonable to say more of it, as I know your thoughts are almost engrossed by other subjects. I know by my own experience in a like situation, how difficult it must be for you to recover that composure of mind which is necessary to the performance of your various duties, as well as to the prevention of those miseries which result from unbridled grief.

'"Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus tam cari capitis?"

'This was perhaps a saying fitter for a heathen than for a Christian, unless the words be understood with much restriction. Horace knew not what was become of his departed friends. But, I suppose, you have little doubt that our departed friend is now with Christ, and that she is ten thousand times happier than she would ever be with you. Did you love her as well as you loved yourself, you will not then give scope to over much sorrow that she has attained the happiness of an angel, at the expense of your own chief earthly comfort.

'I believe you have sometimes thought of your venerable grandfather, and of many other departed friends, with mingled sentiments of pleasure and pain. Whilst you mourned that your eyes of flesh would no more behold them, you rejoiced that you had such satisfying ground to believe that they were happy beyond your conception; and now adored that boundless grace through which you humbly hoped that you would one day be admitted to them in their felicity. You will now find it more difficult than ever to correct the exorbitancies of passion by the consolatory thoughts which the Gospel suggests. You mourn more bitterly than when you wept for your mother. Yet it will be a relief to your mind, to consider that the very things which aggravate your sorrow are causes likewise of joy and thankfulness. You mourn the loss of a companion whom you had so much occasion to love with the warmest affection; but you have so much the more reason to think that she was

prepared for a better world. It was not her beauty, but her piety, that chiefly drew your regard. You gave thanks to God that you had so strong reasons to love her, not only in the flesh, but in the Lord; and still you do not retract your thanksgiving for the grace bestowed on her, although at the remembrance of it your soul is poured out within you.

'The sweetness of her temper was another cause of your warm attachment. But the remembrance of this may likewise soothe your grief. It recommended her good example, and makes the remembrance of her at once pleasant and mournful to all her friends.

'It is a favourable providence to you, that her mother is still left alive. I condole with her, as well as with you; but let her remember what other mothers have suffered; what even the mother of our Lord suffered; and what causes of joy she has beyond many others who have suffered as she has done.

'My wife and daughters cordially sympathize with you. But the compassions of the Father of mercies, and of the High Priest of our profession, will suggest thoughts incomparably more consoling than the attentions of your best friends on earth. God grant that you and I may, by Divine mercy, be admitted at our latter end into that blessed society, into which I am persuaded His abundant grace has already admitted some of our dearest friends. They were sinners like us, and were called to trust in that Saviour who loved them, and washed them from their sins in His own blood.—I am, yours affectionately.

'I had read of the melancholy occurrence in the papers this morning, and resolved immediately to write to you by the first post. Your letter came when I was about to wrap up for the post.

'We have all our share of griefs assigned to us. I request your prayers for a young member of my family—a pleasant child, who has been several weeks in a weakly condition,

although we are not without good hopes of her recovery. I hope for your prayers on her behalf and mine.

'We need our corrections. The time is coming (or rather now is, if we know our heart), when we will see that we needed very powerful but painful means to keep alive the impression that God alone must be our portion. What are the brittle cisterns to the fountain of living waters!

'G. LAWSON.'

Dr Brown to Dr Lawson.

'MY DEAR SIR,—Many thanks to you for your kind sympathy, and friendly expression of it. It was "a word in season to those who were weary." A realizing persuasion of the truths to which you turn our attention, would make all afflictions comparatively easy. I hope a good Providence is restoring your daughter to health, and that it will appear in due time that it has been good for her to have borne the yoke in her youth. I request your acceptance of the discourse which accompanies this, as a sincere expression of my affectionate respect for you—"Parvum munus quidem sed magnum testatur amicus."—I am, my dear Sir, yours very truly,

'JOHN BROWN.

'BIGGAR, *June* 14, 1816.'

Dr Brown took a very zealous part in the effort to obtain a memoir of Dr Lawson. It is now greatly to be regretted that he himself could not be prevailed upon to write it. Had he yielded to the solicitations of his brethren, the world would, in all probability, have been put in possession of that proof of Dr Lawson's extensive learning and high religious worth, which can now be only dimly reflected in the fugitive memorials gathered up into this volume. Dr Lawson did not live to witness the rise of this distinguished pupil to the chief seats of learning and piety; but there is reason to believe that the shadows of the coming divine, and of his useful

life were cast before the mind's eye of the discerning Professor.

The Rev. John Ballantine, of Stonehaven, in Kincardineshire, is second to none of the Selkirk students, living or dead. He is justly revered as the philosopher of our Church. His tastes lay in metaphysics, and he handled them as a master. On the lone shores of the German Ocean his calm and thoughtful life passed quietly away, but not until he had published those works which do not suffer by comparison with the best of the Scotch school of philosophy. His 'Examination of the Human Mind' is clearly entitled to this distinction, and will transmit his name to posterity so long as scholarly accomplishments and the science of reasoning are maintained upon the high places of enlightened eras. His much esteemed Professor had gone to heaven before this preeminence was reached, but not before Dr Lawson had marked in the student the promise of its coming. Mr Ballantine had for his nearest neighbour a man of kindred sympathies, and with whom for many years he held intercourse alike friendly and intellectual—the late Rev. Henry Angus, of Aberdeen, who was in many respects one of the most marked men that emanated from Selkirk Hall. In their mutual reverence for their great tutor, they were never without a theme. Many a time was the *stalwart* and handsome figure of the Aberdeen minister seen upon the road of fifteen miles, that leads by that cold and rocky shore to Stonehaven; visits which were joyously repaid by the *thinker* and *speculator* there, who found, besides, in the classic halls of the colleges of Aberdeen, not a little to stimulate his congenial soul. The mind of Henry Angus was cast in a mould just less nervous than it was profound and self-reliant. Circumstances only were wanting to bring him out as an original thinker and a most eloquent preacher. He had the two things which were never found apart in a truly great and generous nature—head

and heart. His reverence for his Professor was almost a passion.

Dr Marshall, of Kirkintilloch, was one of the most widely known of the Selkirk men of 'power.' His Professor stood very high, indeed, in his estimation, and, in some respects, few had drunk deeper into the spirit of Lawson. He was an ardent student, and preserved his literary tastes to the end of his long and useful life. As a scholar, he had no superior; and as a controversialist, no equal in our Church. His works upon civil establishments of religion are masterpieces, and have dealt a blow at Erastianism, under which it staggers at this moment. It is now generally admitted on all hands, that he was the Father of what is called 'The Voluntary Church Controversy.' That doctrinal misunderstanding of his with his friends Drs Brown and Balmer was a sad affair, and would have ended perhaps more satisfactorily had there been less of *temper* and more of *charity* in it. It is much to be regretted that he felt it to be his duty to disconnect himself from his brethren; but though he left them here, he has rejoined them in heaven. His manly, consistent, and successful efforts to preserve religious liberty, and to hold within proper bounds an enlightened movement to emancipate evangelical truth from dogmatic fetters, entitle him to the admiration and gratitude of all the generous and the just. It was a sufficient tribute to the learning and wisdom of Marshall, that, when Dr Lawson died, he was proposed in the Synod by Dr Dick to fill the vacant chair.

Dr Balmer, of Berwick, was another of the Selkirk students who achieved greatness. Like his friend, Dr Brown, he looked upon their venerable tutor as 'a prince in Israel;' and, like all the rest of the Selkirk men, his mind, when in the repose of social and friendly fellowship, discovered its Lawsonian prejudices and attachments. It is well known that

the conscientious and honourable mind of Dr Balmer was troubled, at the period of his license, upon some points in the Church's Formula. This reached the ears of the Professor, and drew from him the following judicious and loving letter :—

Dr Lawson to Mr Balmer.

'SELKIRK, *December* 1809.

'DEAR SIR,—I am sorry to hear that you are still averse to enter on trials, especially as the inference drawn by some from your conduct is, that you propose to leave us altogether, and to seek license to preach amongst another body of men. I certainly will not pretend a right to dictate to any young man's conscience. If I thought you were persuaded that it is your duty to associate yourself with any other body of Christians, my only advice to you would be, "Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good." If there is any hesitation in your mind on the subject, I think you might probably receive satisfaction by reading, if you have not already read and considered, Mr Wilson's "Defence of the Reformation Principles of the Church of Scotland," which I could send to you from the library, if you wish for it. A copy of the book, in addition to a former copy, was given by Mr Paterson, and I think it well deserves the study of young men. I deferred going to the study of divinity for one session, that I might compare it with books written on the other side. I am sure, at least, you will endeavour to act upon principle, and that you will not alter your religious profession from motives extraneous to religion. We are not Christians if our fear towards God is regulated by anything else but the authority of Christ. It has been alleged that you entertain a low opinion of some of our ministers, or of those that may one day become ministers in our body. I admit that some amongst us are not above, if not below, mediocrity; but I am persuaded that you will not judge of the merits of a par-

ticular mode of religious profession by the talents of every minister who holds it. You will not even think that their respectability and usefulness are to be measured by their talents. There are some, perhaps, amongst us of the lower order of talent, who are, on the whole, more worthy of esteem, and more useful ministers to their people, than others whose intellectual accomplishments are much superior. We have much need of preachers, and I should be glad to have you in the number, if your conscience make no objections. If it does, I will be the last man to urge you to enter upon trials. I hope you have the call of God; and the more self-denial you exercise in His service, you will find the more comfort in it.—Yours affectionately, 'GEORGE LAWSON.'

To this kind and judicious epistle the student sent the following reply:—

Mr Balmer to Dr Lawson.

'EDINBURGH, 10*th January* 1810.

'REV. SIR,—The multiplicity of my avocations prevented me from acknowledging, last week, the reception of your very kind epistle. I must begin this letter by thanking you for the interest which you take in my future conduct, for the useful advices with which you have favoured me, and for the favourable opinion which you are pleased to express respecting my character.

'There is no person whose good opinion I would be more anxious to possess than your own; and, therefore, I regret exceedingly that I cannot at this time see it my duty to comply with your wishes by entering on trials for license. Were you acquainted, however, with the motives by which I am actuated, I feel convinced that you yourself would not disapprove of my conduct. To give a full or explicit statement of these motives would, in a letter of this kind, be altogether impracticable. I shall content myself with saying in

general, that my repugnance to enter on trials originates chiefly in conscientious scruples respecting the Formula. In the religious creed of the Burghers, there is not perhaps a single article which I positively disbelieve. There are several, however, of which I am sceptical, because I am unacquainted with the evidence on which they rest. There are also many expressions of which I decidedly disapprove; and, finally, there are many doctrines and dogmas in it, which I think ought never to have been introduced into a system of religious belief.

'Such, sir, are the circumstances in which I am placed; and in such circumstances I humbly hope that my resolution of not being licensed at this time will not meet with your disapprobation. If the step I now take should appear to you blameable or imprudent, I am sure, at least, that it has not been the result of inconsideration. From the very commencement of my theological studies, the idea of becoming a preacher has always appeared to me a frightful one, and the further I advanced the more frightful it became. Of late I have thought frequently and seriously on the subject, and the more I reflect on it the more I am convinced of the propriety of the determination which I have adopted.

'With regard to the reports which have been circulated respecting my leaving the Burghers, I hope you will be satisfied when I declare to you sincerely and explicitly, that at present I entertain no fixed design of apostatizing to the Established Church. I am uncertain whether I may ever become a preacher; but I hope that I shall never relinquish the religious connection in which I have been educated, unless I should afterwards embrace opinions which incapacitate me for becoming one of its members.—I am, Rev. Sir, yours sincerely, 'R. BALMER.'

'*P.S.*—I have not studied very carefully Wilson's "Defence," and would like to re-peruse it, if it could be conveniently sent. Direct to me at Mrs Macdonald's, Mr

Peddie's Entry, or to the care of Mr Peddie, Bristo Street. The book sent with this I beg you will accept as a small token of gratitude and affection.'

Dr Henderson, of Galashiels, yielded to none of his compeers in an enthusiastic appreciation of their tutor; he was second to none of them in fine natural talents, purified and strengthened by a piety and humility of character strikingly resembling that of Dr Lawson. He was his nearest neighbour, and enjoyed good opportunities of knowing his worth. One of the last public meetings which he attended was the celebration of the centenary of Dr Lawson's church at Selkirk. On that evening, as if led to seize the last opportunity of paying to him a tribute of respect, he, with great solemnity of manner, testified to the wonderful accomplishments of his beloved friend. 'I studied,' he said, 'under Dr Lawson at the Theological Hall here; and for ten years after I was ordained at Galashiels, I had him as my nearest neighbour, and ever found him ready to afford me wise counsel. If ever there was a man to be venerated and loved, that man was Dr Lawson. To his profound learning he added one of the warmest of hearts. He had a way of making known to his students what Dr Dick calls "the profundities of theology," so as to convince the judgment and impress the memory. As a preacher, there was nothing rhetorical in his manner—there was nothing flowery in his style, but his sermons were full of strong sound sense; and sometimes he presented the most important truths in such a plain form, and in such few and simple observations, that many wondered how the same thoughts had not occurred to themselves.' Dr Henderson took part in encouraging the compiler to undertake this memoir. It was, indeed, the subject of his last conversation upon earth. The esteemed grandson and present successor of Dr Lawson in Selkirk, had just left him after obtaining his promise to afford the compiler all the aid in his power, when

he retired to rest, and almost immediately returned to heaven. The Rev. Dr Nicol, of Jedburgh, who would have been equally ready to contribute his reminiscences, and whose contributions would have been very valuable, died unexpectedly about the same time. In Dr Henderson's admirable memoir of Dr Balmer, there is a simple but touching reference to the Hall at Selkirk:—'They who have attended the Hall at Selkirk, generally, we believe, look back on the time spent there as among the happiest of their days. Think of a number of young men, released from the irksome labours of teaching, coming together in a small country town, where they were necessarily thrown on each other's society during the six or eight weeks of the session. They had to listen to the prelections of a man who possessed, above most others, the faculty of making plain the deep things of revealed truth; and who was not the less venerated and loved by his pupils, for the unaffected simplicity, and even occasional negligence in manner, which were associated in him with profound learning, warm affections, and fervent piety. They had their own societies for various objects connected with their studies, the management of the library, and several others; and in these sometimes the warm debate would arise, yet leaving no gall behind;—and their walks together through some of the most beautiful pastoral scenery on the banks of the Ettrick, the Yarrow, and the Tweed, during which, amid graver discussions, the jest and the repartee would be at times playfully breaking forth, the humorous story be told, or even the sports of boyhood be for the moment resumed. It may be there was more of social enjoyment than of severe study, but it was a time of mutual excitement: stores were treasured up for future digestion; the faculties which would have rusted in solitude were brightened up in the friendly collision of mind with mind; and intimacies were formed which ripened into friendships that blessed after years.'

It is only justice to the memory of this able and most

estimable man, to append to this mere reference the very discriminating and beautiful account of him which Dr John Brown (junior) gives in this letter to Dr Cairns :—

'He was, in the true sense, what Chalmers used to call a man of *wecht.* His mind acted by its sheer absolute power; it seldom made an effort; it was the hydraulic pressure, harmless, manageable, but irresistible,—not the perilous compression of steam. Therefore it was that he was untroubled and calm, though rich; clear, though deep; though gentle, never dull; "strong, without rage; without o'erflowing, full." . . . We question if as many carefully thought and worded, and rapidly, and by no means laboriously written sermons, were composed anywhere else in Britain during his fifty years: every Sabbath, two new ones; the composition faultless, such as Cicero or Addison would have made them had they been United Presbyterian ministers, only there was always in them more soul than body,—more of the spirit than of the letter. . . . The original power and *size* of Dr Henderson's mind, his roominess for all thoughts, and his still reserve, his lenitude, made, as we have said, his expressions clear and quiet, to a degree that a coarse and careless man, spoiled by the violence and noise of other pulpit men, might think insipid. But let him go over the words slowly, and he would not say this again; and let him see and hear the solemnizing, commanding power of that large, square, leonine countenance—the broad, massive frame, as of a compressed Hercules—and the living, pure, melodious voice, powerful, but not by reason of loudness, dropping out from his compressed lips the words of truth,—and he would not say this again. . . . The thoughts of such men, so rare, so apt to be unvisited and unvalued, often bring into my mind a spring of pure water I once saw near the top of Cairngorm,—always the same,—cool in summer,—keeping its few plants alive and happy with its warm breath in winter,—floods and droughts never making its pulse change;

and all this because it came from the interior heights, and was distilled by nature's own cunning, and had taken its time—was, indeed, a well of living water. And with Dr Henderson this of the mountain holds curiously: he was retired, but not concealed; and he was of the primary formation—he had no *organic remains* of other men in him. He liked and fed on all manner of literature; knew poetry well: but it was all outside of him; his thoughts were essentially his own. . . . He was peculiarly a preacher for preachers, as Spenser is a poet for poets. They felt he was a master.'

Dr Thomson, of Coldstream, was also, in every sense of the word, a Lawsonian. His self-denying labours in the cause of a free and a cheap Bible are never to be forgotten. He lived under a most unusually solemn impression of the awfulness and the value of God's Word; and to a similar trait in Dr Lawson's character, may be traced that passion for the emancipation and circulation of the Scriptures under which the Coldstream philanthropist lived, sacrificed, and died. 'Dr Thomson (to quote from an interesting sketch which has just been given of him) was nearly the sole survivor of a veteran band that had stood forward conspicuously and together in all those movements for the spread of the Gospel, and in all those contendings for civil and religious liberty, which have distinguished the last two generations. That band numbered such men as Drs Peddie, Balmer, Heugh, Young, Wardlaw, Stark (of Dennyloanhead), Henderson, and John Brown; and beside and abreast of these heroes, Dr Thomson had ever laboured and fought: for though he had a rural and obscure station compared with that which the most of them had been destined to occupy, yet his superabundant vigilance, promptitude, and zeal overcame all disadvantages, and enabled him to emerge from his Border watch-tower, and, fully accoutred, make his appearance upon

the scene of action, quite as early as any of his brethren. Distant from the centres of agitation and the sources of impulse, he was yet among the first to reach the battle-field, and occupy either the vantage ground or the posts of danger. His faculties and energies for the discussion of public questions completely escaped the rust which is generally believed to come upon them in a country pastorate. In the very heart of rural stagnation, his life was an unresting wave; and, unaffected by the *inertia* all around, he kept himself in perpetual motion. . . . The Divinity Hall in the Secession Church had only one Professor—the Rev. Dr Lawson; and he monopolized such an amount of confidence, affection, admiration, and reverence, as might have been divided among a largely equipped college or faculty, though he was the most modest of men. Adam Thomson loved, honoured, and all but worshipped this most accomplished, fascinating, yet utterly unsophisticated teacher, whom his pupils, in naming "the Christian Socrates," think they praise but faintly. The small town where the class met—Selkirk, with its beautiful pastoral vicinity—conspired, with the Professor, to give to Hall life a tender romance, which was afterwards, throughout manhood and old age, fondly cherished, and never permitted to pass away from the associations.'[1] This small niche is justly assigned to the man who wrested the Bible from the jaw of monopoly, who was the author of several valuable works, who was thought worthy to preach the funeral sermon of Dr Lawson, and whose sermon, when published, was honoured with a highly favourable review from the pen of the well-known Dr David Welsh, Professor of Church History in the Edinburgh University.

Dr Fletcher, of London, on several accounts, merits notice as one of Dr Lawson's students. No man could more highly esteem the Professor than he did, and very few of the

[1] *United Presbyterian Magazine* for April 1861.

Selkirk men have obtained such celebrity. He was the most popular preacher of his day, and obtained several calls to churches then vacant. His fame as the 'prince of preachers' to children is world-wide; and the sale of above 60,000 copies of his 'Family Devotions' proves his acceptability as an author. He died the pastor of the most spacious chapel in the city of London, having sustained his wonderful popularity to the end of a long and useful life. The compiler has heard him dwell with unusual complacency on his intercourse in early life with Dr Lawson and his friends; nor did he shy the subject, though it might, at a time, tell rather against himself. He was wont to repeat the Professor's rather severe criticisms upon his Hall performances; and we have frequently laughed with him over a story he used to tell in connection with his call to be colleague and successor to Mr Kidston of Stow. At that time, 'Alexander Fletcher' was in everybody's mouth, as the most eloquent of all the young men then on probation in the Burgher Church. He was what is called 'ragingly popular' about Stow; and peradventure, unknown to himself, the good old pastor there might be somewhat jealous of him. At all events, on a certain day previous to the 'call,' the young man had preached to the delight and even wonderment of a great gathering of people. On coming into the manse thereafter, Mr Kidston thanked him for his discourse, and then added, with great suavity, 'Well, Sandie, I must admit you're very sound; but O, man, you're no deep.' It was at this time, too, that a member of the Stow congregation met Dr Lawson, and was loud in the praises of Mr Fletcher as their expected junior pastor, finishing up an extravagant eulogium with these words, 'And to tell the truth, Doctor, such a preacher is Alexander Fletcher, that I may say we never heard the Gospel before.' 'You must not say that,' replied Dr Lawson, 'you have had the Gospel preached to you in all its richness during all Mr Kidston's ministry; but

you may say, if you like, that you have never heard the Gospel *so* preached.' In telling the critique of Mr Kidston on his own preaching, Dr Fletcher used to remark that his experience warranted him in saying that 'deep preaching was just another name for *dark* preaching.' For the first two years of his ministry, Dr Fletcher was the colleague of his father, in Bridge of Teith, Perthshire. The good old man, it seems, was rather jealous of his son's great popularity—particularly of the swelling encomiums that were often passed in his hearing, on the excellence of his son's discourses. Temper, too, was not sweetened by the crowds that assembled when it was the son that was to preach, the old man having generally no more than the ordinary audience. Young Alexander came to feel this state of his father's mind to be rather painful, and the following happy expedient to cure it was resorted to. He asked the loan of one of his father's manuscript sermons, and, having committed it to memory, he delivered it on the following Sabbath with more than his usual fervour. The people, on retiring, were louder than ever in praise of the juvenile orator; and one worthy remarked, 'The old man never preached a sermon in his life equal to that.' On entering the manse, Alexander found his father alone, and having adverted to the matter, asked him, 'Father, is that satisfactory?' 'O ay,' said he, 'quite satisfactory.' 'Yes,' rejoined the son, 'and you see, after all, how little worth the popular prejudices are.' The old man was completely cured of all jealousy in future.

Several of the Selkirk students became famous as good scholars and successful pastors: few, if any of them, turned out either wits or poets. In the hard and methodical work of an earnest pastorate, the odds are against success in the fine arts. To a conscientious minister of the Gospel, the finest of all arts must ever be the art of preaching well; the sublimest of all poetry must ever be the song of redeeming love; and the most attic of all wit must ever be the wisdom

of winning souls. Tried by such standards, the students of Dr Lawson deservedly occupy a high place among their compeers. We have heard of only one of them who made pretensions to genuine witticisms—the late Rev. Walter Dunlop, of Dumfries, of whom many really good anecdotes are alive to this day. He was a man of solid rather than of bright talents, of 'pawky' rather than of simple mindedness, but still with a considerable dash of genuine humour in his temperament, and occasionally giving vent to a bit of sly wit which smacked of the satirical.

The Rev. James Law, of Kirkcaldy, was, perhaps, in respect of wit and satire, the most marked man among the Selkirk students. In piety and talent he was not inferior to any of them. He was ordained as colleague to the far-famed Mr Shirra, on whose eccentricities he delighted to expatiate. Of remarkable kindliness of disposition, he was at the same time an acute and dexterous dialectician. When interested in an argument, or once fairly set in motion upon its merits, his resources as to logic, and sometimes as to sophisms, were absolutely inexhaustible. We never saw him floored, and we have often seen him fighting duels with the best of polemics. Above all, his temper was under self-control to an extent that has not often been equalled; it seldom yielded to provocation, continuing as calm and gentle in the thick of the fray, as when he coolly wiped the edge of the weapon wherewith the first thrust was taken. His powers of debate, consequently, were first-rate. When he employed them in the pulpit, his sermons rose to greatness alike in thought and eloquence; and, had he qualified himself for parliamentary life, he would have adorned even the floor of St Stephens. To other qualities he added that of sterling uprightness of character and genuine friendliness of heart. It is singular that, with his peculiar proneness to argument upon almost every subject, he never made one of his friends his enemy.

He lived to a good old age, having witnessed the celebration of his jubilee, and then fell asleep in the arms of 'the Lord his Shepherd.'

An anecdote, illustrative of true humour, is told of one of the Selkirk men, and may here be set down. Mr —— was a well-known wag, though an excellent man and diligent pastor. There was a sort of infidel and scoffing character in the town where he lived, commonly called 'Jock Hammon.' Jock had a nickname for Mr ——, which, though profane, had reference to the well-known evangelical character of his ministry. 'There's "*the grace o' God*,"' he would say, as he saw the good man passing by, and he usually talked of him under that designation. It so happened that Mr —— had on one occasion consented to take the chair at some public meeting. The hour of meeting was past, the place of meeting was filled, but no Mr —— appeared. Symptoms of impatience were manifested, when a voice was heard from one corner of the hall, 'My friends, there will be "no grace o' God" here the nicht.' Just at this moment the door opened, and Mr —— appeared, casting, as he entered, a rather knowing look upon 'Jock Hammon' as he ejaculated these words. On taking the chair, Mr —— apologized for his being so late. 'I had,' he said, 'to go into the country to preside in the examination of Mr ——'s school, and really the young folks conducted themselves so well that I could scarce get away from them. If you please, I will just give you a specimen of the examination. I called up an intelligent-looking girl, and asked her if she had ever heard of any one who had erected a gallows for another, and who had been hanged on it himself. "Yes," replied the girl, "it was Haman." With that, up started another little girl, and she said, "Eh, minister, that's no true! Hammon's no hanged yet; for I saw him at the public-house door this forenoon, and he was swearing like a trooper"' (upon this there was considerable tittering among the audience, and eyes were

directed to the corner where *Jock* was sitting). 'You are both quite right, my little dears,' said Mr ——, with a sort of 'glaikit' look towards the first girl: 'Your *Haman* was really hanged, as he deserved to be; and (turning towards the other) your *Hammon*, my lambie, is no hanged yet, by "the grace o' God."' The effect of this upon the hearers was electric, and, amid roars of laughter, Jock rushed out of the meeting, and, for a time at least, he ceased to make the Secession minister the object of his scurrilous jokes.

But we must complete these *souvenirs* with brief references to one or two of the most distinguished Selkirk men, who, though they left the Secession for other denominations, never ceased to cherish for their Professor equal love and respect.

Ralph Wardlaw, D.D., the accomplished scholar, divine, and philosopher, though he saw it to be his duty to join the Independent body, left a good part of his warm heart where his wise head got its clear and massive theology—in the old mother church. Often in private, and on many public occasions too, we have heard him refer, with grateful emotion, to the happy and precious days he had spent in the Secession Hall, and to the eminent attainment and graces of his only theological tutor. It was with some degree of pardonable pride that he boasted of 'the Secession blood in his veins.' He was a lineal and near descendant from Ebenezer Erskine. Born and brought up within the pale of the Secession, of which his great ancestor was the founder, he never ceased to hold her, her ministers, and her people, in the fondest esteem; and carried his veneration for his Professor to the grave. When he published his celebrated work on the Socinian controversy, he sent the book to Dr Lawson, with the following note:—

'My dear Sir,—In the signature of this note you will recognise the name of an old pupil, who, although led by

convictions of duty to leave the religious connection to which he once belonged, still retains an undiminished attachment to his former friends; and to no one of them more sincerely and fervently, than to the beloved and respected tutor under whom he spent so happily his allotted time as a student—time to which, in looking back, he feels only one regret, that the valuable opportunities of instruction which it afforded were not better improved.

'I hope, my dear sir, that the volume which accompanies this, and of which I beg your acceptance, as a small token of affectionate remembrance, will not be found utterly unworthy of your approbation. When you have looked through it, it will give me very great pleasure to be favoured with your *free* remarks on any points in which you may think it faulty.

'The subject is one—or rather, I should say, the subjects are (for, although inseparably connected, they are various) of immense importance; and the preface will sufficiently explain to you the circumstances which led to the publication.

'I have to request, also, that you will place the other copy in the Students' Library.

'Wishing you every personal, domestic, and official blessing, in which good wishes Mrs Wardlaw, although absent, I know would very sincerely join,—I am ever, my dear Sir, yours very sincerely, 'RALPH WARDLAW.

'GLASGOW, *June* 7, 1814.'

JOHN LEE, D.D., the late venerable Principal of the University of Edinburgh, was a native of Stow, and was brought up in the Secession Church, under Mr Kidston. Before joining the Church of Scotland, he, like Dr Wardlaw, had completed his education within the pale of the Secession. His appreciation of Dr Lawson was alike just and grateful. He resembled, in many things, his theological Professor. In personal appearance there was a general likeness; but this was more remarkable in their singular powers of exposi-

tion, in their ardent pursuit of sacred learning, and their general scholarly habits and attainments. Though he rose to the highest places in his Church, and became an authority, both in the Assembly and in the Senatus Academicus, upon all Church and College matters, he seemed to take a pride in referring to his Secession origin, and especially to his Selkirk training. The reader will peruse with satisfaction the following most interesting letter of Principal Lee to the compiler, acknowledging the receipt of the sermons that had been preached on the occasion of the death of Dr Kidston. It is inserted here, under the impression that Dr Lee, had he lived, would have been gratified by his finding a place in these reminiscences of men and matters, in which he ever felt both a pleasing and a pious interest:—

To the Rev. Dr John Macfarlane.

'College, Edinburgh, 6*th Dec.* 1852.

'My dear Sir,—If it had not been at the very end of last week that I was favoured with a copy of your sermon, and Mr Ker's, on a late sad and solemn event, I would have taken occasion, by return of post, to acknowledge what I feel to be a most gratifying mark of genuine good will. Not knowing their address, I use the freedom to ask you to communicate to the surviving family of my late friend, the assurance of my heartfelt sympathy on the loss of a parent so worthy of their reverence and love. To you also, and Mr Ker, I beg to express my obligation for the Christian feeling and just discernment with which the character of the late Dr Kidston has been portrayed. I must confess that my perusal of the "Discourses" has hitherto been hurried and interrupted, in consequence of pressing engagements at a period of infirm and precarious health. If it were not very painful to me at present to use a pen, I would be tempted to indulge for a while in recalling some of my reminiscences of Dr Kidston, of whom, though he appears to have been

born not quite twelve years before me, my oldest recollection is that of hearing him preach, and being impressed with the conviction that preaching was a much prettier and more pleasing thing than I had ever thought it before. The Rev. William Kidston, senior, was a very sound divine, and both fervent and faithful in declaring the counsel of God. Both my grandfather and father were members of his session, and from the years of infancy I had accompanied my parents to church; but it is no derogation from the excellences of the father to say, that the accents of the son fell more softly on my ear; and he appeared to me to find out more acceptable words. I remember fragments of sentences in discourses which must have been delivered when I was not twelve years old. I remember several of his texts, some of them a little later, perhaps, than 1792; but I think about the earliest which struck me was 2 Cor. ix. 15. Several of the others related to the history of the sufferings of the Redeemer. All the occasions on which I heard him were at the time of the communion. I remember two discourses on 1 Chron. xii. 32, preached, I believe, at the interval of twelve months. I cannot be sure that I ever heard him but once after I was seventeen years old; for, after I went to College in 1794, when I had completed my fourteenth year, I was very seldom in that part of the country, except for a short time in the summer months, till the autumn of 1797; after which, I may say, I was never more than a few days occasionally there. I have a most lively remembrance of his elegant appearance and his graceful manner, as well as what I considered as an easy classical style, which was recommended by fluent, rapid, and animated utterance. His figure was slender and exceedingly neat; and there was a simple becomingness in his dress, totally devoid of any appearance of affectation. At the time of my original recollection of him, ministers and preachers almost universally wore hair-powder. I think he never did; but his hair, for a few years, was long and flowing, longer, I

think, than we see it in the most youthful pictures of Milton, but producing the same impression on the whole. Now and then he admitted into a sermon a single line, or perhaps two lines, from Milton or from Addison. I remember, in his table addresses, hearing oftener than once this line introduced (from the Messiah), "And Heaven's eternal day be thine." But I never suspected him of anything like studied parade, or an elaborate display of artificial oratory. There was a winning gentleness in his aspect and intonations, which harmonized well with the scriptural purity of the sentiments which flowed from his tongue; and though I certainly thought him a choice model, I do not suppose that his manner was formed upon any other. Now, perhaps, I should be ashamed of troubling you with reciting a few particulars, which are, on the whole, so trivial, as being not more than impressions formed in the period of childhood; but, as they have clung tenaciously to my memory, my heart refuses to let them go. I am not sure that I ever had the pleasure of exchanging words with him till the summer of 1801, at which time I received the degree of M.D. in this University; but I am pretty sure that I never enjoyed the gratification of hearing him preach subsequently to that period, which I now greatly regret. I have felt very sensibly the cordiality and kindness with which he has, from time to time, looked in upon me when he was occasionally in this city; and it has only been in consequence of my almost unceasing professional labours, that I have been prevented from cultivating the friendship of one whom I valued and respected so highly.

I pray that all who were dear to him may inherit, in rich abundance, the blessings which are multiplied to the generation of the upright.—I am, Rev. and dear Sir, yours very faithfully, 'JOHN LEE.'

To these notices of Dr Lawson's more distinguished pupils may be added a passing reference to another whose name is

yet fragrant in the memories of not a few, though he never received a call to any church; and yet he reached a position in public estimation which some better known men might have envied. Mr David Mudie studied at Selkirk. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Dunfermline, and for the long period of more than half a century he served the Church as a probationer; nowhere popular, but everywhere highly esteemed and beloved. He was a good scholar, composed tasteful and evangelical discourses, and continued to the end of his course his habits of study and careful preparation, despite of the disadvantages inseparable from a peripatetic life. He was of singularly sweet and meek temperament, though withal conscious of self-respect and of qualifications which, had it been the will of God, might have made him a most useful pastor. During all the fifty years of his public life he was a strict abstainer from intoxicating drinks; he never in one instance fell into any indecorum or impropriety of any kind, and in every situation maintained unbroken the manner of a gentleman, and unsullied the character of a Christian preacher and of a devout man. He was behind none of the Selkirk men in his appreciation and admiration of the Professor, and, though in general not talkative, he became eloquent when the conversation turned upon the Hall and its memories. He died in a good old age, and his name will ever be associated with the only probationary life in the history of our Church that witnessed its jubilee.

On various occasions Dr Lawson received expressions of the love and respect of his pupils, which still remain as memorials of the worth of their Professor, and of their own sound appreciation of the benefits they derived from his teaching. The striking painting by Pairman, which now adorns the Hall of the United Presbyterian Church in Edinburgh, and from which the portrait in this volume is taken, was presented to him by them. They consulted him in the matter. He quietly took the pipe, in which he was indulging at the

time, from his mouth, and said, 'I am certainly very much obliged to the young gentlemen who wish to put this honour upon me; but I doubt it will be in accordance with the opinion of the good woman, whose husband, while reading at family worship the tenth chapter of Nehemiah, and when the evening was getting somewhat dark, proposed that a candle should be lighted; "Na, na," said she, "I think the cost would o'er-gang the profit."' His natural dislike of ostentation made the consent to 'sit,' and the 'sittings' themselves, disagreeable; but he generally overcame any difficulties to gratify others, especially those he esteemed. The portrait is understood to be a fair likeness. The Rev. Mr Jack, of Dunbar, had the honour of originating this mark of respect to the Professor. At another time, his students presented him with a massive silver claret jug, bearing the following inscription:—

'TO THE REV. PROFESSOR LAWSON, D.D.,
FROM THE STUDENTS UNDER HIS INSPECTION,
IN THE YEAR 1800.'

Dr Thomson gives the following simple but pleasing account of this presentation, in the letter to his brother from which we have already quoted:—

'I had heard that the Professor was labouring under a severe cold, and was sorry, on my arrival, to find that there was too good a foundation for the report. He was often obliged to leave off speaking for some time by the violence of an oppressive cough. It is with the most painful sensations, I must add, that this affliction still continues, and that his best and most intelligent friends dread the consequences. Let us hope and pray that, if it be the will of our Father in heaven, their fears may be removed by his complete recovery.

'The silver cup, which, in the preceding session, we had ordered to be prepared for him, we agreed to present so soon as a competent number of students had come up. It was

received in a manner which astonished some, and pleased all. That he might not be taken at any disadvantage, Mr Campbell and Mr Robson were desired to tell him what we intended to do at the afternoon meeting of the Hall. After the lecture, our president, Mr Blackadder, rose and told the Professor that he was appointed, in name of the students, to deliver to him the cup which he held in his hand, as a testimony of their esteem and affection. The venerable man blushed, and returned thanks in a few modest and appropriate sentences. As nearly as I could recollect them (for I wrote them down immediately after our dismission), they were as follows :—"I am certainly much obliged to the students of last year for the trouble and expense to which they have put themselves. I have always met with more respect from the students than I thought I deserved ; but I was glad of it on their own account, and for the credit of the body to which we belong. The greatest honour, however, that the students can confer upon me, is to behave themselves suitably to their character as students of *divinity* with us, as they have hitherto done, in most instances at least. I accept of the present, and with all gratitude, though it is more than I could have expected." The number of students was smaller than it had been for many years: it did not exceed two or three and thirty. On this account, and as the Professor could not endure the cold in the meeting-house (the chapel), we met, except when discourses were to be delivered, in one of his own largest upper rooms. This afforded another opportunity to our teacher to show how much he was gratified by our present: for, one day after the lecture, he ordered the cup to be set on the table, and along with it, two bottles of wine, and some sugar. He then told us that, as we had done him the honour of presenting him with a silver cup, he thought he could not do less than give us all a glass of wine ; or, if we preferred it, we might have it with water and sugar, out of the cup. The latter way was preferred by all of us. Having, in the

course of the conversation, again expressed his gratitude, he said, "I hope you will not be offended if, at any future period, I shall find it necessary to prevent any similar expressions of kindness, for (with a smile upon his face) it was a saying in my young days, that divinity was free all the world over, and I, for one, should not like to be paid for it."'

It may be thought that the gift, in this case, was somewhat incongruous. But, in these days, such a household article was regarded in the light of an ornament; and, though Dr Lawson was all his days a most abstemious man, he did not the less esteem the motives of his pupils. The jug itself was innocent of wine from the day referred to.

The ardent love that subsisted between the Doctor and his class was especially and often affectingly manifested at the close of the sessions. His partings with them were very tender and affecting. He seldom gave what was called a regular 'valedictory.' He generally delivered only a few practical counsels; and when they had sung an hymn, they went forth their several ways into the world, and into the churches. It is told that, on one of these occasions, he apologized for the want of an adequate 'valedictory,' but hoped the students would be satisfied with a few passages out of his venerable predecessor's addresses. He took up the book, and began to read. So affecting, however, were the ideas, that he could not proceed. The tears flowed down his cheeks. The students caught the infection, and the Hall, for the nonce, became a Bochim. Professor Brown, of Haddington, was quite a master in this class of exhortations, and his students never lost the solemn impressions which they produced. The best specimen of his style, in this respect, is the one given in the Memoir of Dr Waugh (pp. 49, 50, 51), which was drawn up, and forwarded to the compilers of that delightful biography, by the late much esteemed Rev. David Carruthers, of South Queensferry.

At another time, he gave out to be sung the 102d Psalm

(Scotch version), from the 13th verse. He had read the long metre version; but before the singing began, he said, 'The meaning of the passage is not contained there; let us, therefore, use the other version.' At this service, also, he was wont to thank the students for their kind and respectful manner towards himself. 'I know well,' he once remarked, 'that in doing so you have only done your duty, in consequence of the position I occupy; nevertheless, I feel I owe you gratitude. This morning I was reading the history of the prophet Samuel, and of the manner in which he was treated in old age, and I could not help thinking how very differently I was treated, and how far more unworthy I am of it.' At these partings many of the students were in tears, as they bade 'farewell' to the venerable sage, and as he blessed them in his turn. Three of the students had gone to his house to bid him adieu; and as he shook them by the hand, he said, 'You do not return to your place as Joshua sent away the children of Reuben and the children of Gad—with much riches of silver and gold; but I hope you go away with your minds stored with Divine truth, and your hearts with holy affections—a treasure far better.' Then, turning to one of the three who was in delicate health, he added, with a faltering voice, 'You are not so well in body as your friends would wish you; but you are in the hands of a good God, who knows what is to be the issue of our afflictions, and the best issue. Farewell!' He had no melancholy in his constitution, but he was very sensitive to the impressions which are made by the action either of friendly or religious sentiments. For instance, as he himself invariably opened the Hall on Monday, and closed it on Saturday, with prayer, the students noticed that, in the Saturday prayer, the hallowed influence of the approaching Sabbath was already strong upon him; while in the Monday one, it was evident that his mind was, as it were, coming out of some peculiarly holy frame, and preparing itself for only less sacred employment.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE POLEMIC AND HIS ASSOCIATES.

Dr Lawson had occupied the chair of Divinity for nearly ten years, and was pursuing his pastoral and literary labours with much comfort and success, when he was called upon, for the first and only time in his life, to enter the arena of controversy. We have no intention to narrate the details of the matter; but the influential position which he occupied in it, justifies a sketch of the 'Old Light Controversy,' as it has been called,—a controversy which universally agitated the Church, and for a time threatened very serious injury, both from the alienation and separation of brethren. Greatly owing, however, to the wisdom and moderation of such leaders as Dr Lawson, the tumult gradually subsided, and the dreaded evils were averted. So soon as the fiery spirits had withdrawn from her pale, the Secession returned to her rest, and to more than her former prosperity. For once, and only once in his life, did the peaceful student on the Ettrick act as the Nestor of his party.

The matter involved in this controversy was the vexed question of the power of the civil magistrate in religion, together with the obligation of the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant. The standards of the Church were then what they are now, the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, wherein, without doubt, are taught that the magistrate has ecclesiastical power in the Church; that he can call and dismiss her assemblies; that he can enforce her laws and ordinances, and

inflict pains and penalties upon the refractory and non-conforming. Preachers, when licensed, and ministers, when ordained, were required to declare their belief in such doctrines, and to teach them according to the best of their ability. This declaration was given in answer to a series of questions called '*The Formula;*' which questions were proposed twice over to all candidates for the holy ministry—at the time of license, and again at their ordination. At the period of the Secession, and for many years after it, these standards were subscribed without any demurring, just as in the Established Church of Scotland; but about the year 1795, and indeed for several years preceding, not a few enlightened and conscientious men, having examined the matter seriously and prayerfully, did not hesitate to make known their reluctance to yield unqualified subscription to this formula. In some instances, probationers before taking license, and ministers before ordination, positively declined to do so, unless they had liberty to object to those clauses that taught, or were supposed to teach, compulsory and intolerant principles in religion. In every instance in which this liberty was claimed, it was ceded; and in all parts of the country the Presbyteries were, upon these terms, licensing and ordaining to the work of the ministry the young men whose consciences in this matter were thus relieved.

The feeling in favour of toleration, or rather against compulsion in matters of faith, soon spread abroad over the Church, and at length found its way into the deliberations of the Supreme Court. At the meeting of the Associate Synod held at Edinburgh in May 1795, a petition was laid upon the table, praying for such a change in the standards as would correspond with the views now so generally entertained. The petitioner was the Rev. John Frazer, of Auchtermuchty. A series of very keen discussions in this and following Synods was the result. By one party the change petitioned for was insisted upon as wise, righteous, and indispensable; by the

other party all or any change was strenuously resisted. The former obtained the 'nom de guerre' of the 'New Light,' and were by far the most numerous and influential men in the Church. The latter were designated the 'Old Light,' and were the firm and fierce defenders of things as they were; the old leaven, in short, that still worketh in all the opposition to progress and toleration alike in State and Church. 'The wisdom of our ancestors' was inscribed on their banners. After nearly a four years' war, it was moved and carried in the Synod of 1799, that there should be prefixed to the Formula a declaration disowning all compulsory measures in religion; and, while acknowledging the obligation of the Covenants, giving every one the fullest liberty to put his own construction upon the nature of such obligation. This declaration was *prefixed* to the Formula, and received the title of the *Preamble*, thus qualifying all the questions that followed, and determining their import. A small minority of ministers and elders contented themselves with entering upon the minutes a simple dissent from this resolution; but immediately thereafter, they withdrew entirely from their brethren and formed themselves into a separate body, ycleped 'The Original Associate Synod,' *alias* 'The Old Light Burghers.'

Now, the part taken by the Professor in this controversy was from the first decided. Convinced that the disallowance of the magistrate's power, and the obligation of the Covenants, was demanded alike by Scripture and reason, he calmly but manfully entered the arena of debate, and did not retire from it till he had, if not confounded, at least dispersed the opposition. Upon the subject under dispute, his clear and penetrating judgment never hesitated; and what he conscientiously believed he boldly avowed. Indeed, he was far ahead of many of the brethren with whom he acted, and advocated a more thorough and complete change. The Formula then was the somewhat modified or provisional

measure which passed; for there were in the Synod three parties: the *obstructives*, who were opposed to any change; the *middle-men*, who were friendly to the measure of compromise which was ultimately adopted; and the *advanced section*, who were for such an entire and unmistakeable change, as to preclude the necessity for all future discussion and legislation upon the disputed points. To this third party Dr Lawson belonged, and he was joined in a dissent from the deed by seventeen ministers, whose names deserve to be held, and are held, in much esteem among us—Dr Hall, Dr Peddie, Dr Dick, Dr Jack, Dr Kidston, Dr Schaw, Mr Leckie, Mr Russell, Mr Haddin, Mr Dewar, Mr R. Hall, Mr Leitch, Mr Gilchrist, Mr Dick, Mr Cameron, Mr Yule, and Mr Lata—the enlightened and far-seeing pioneers of that rising and growing cause of our time, the spirituality and independence of the Church of Christ. It cannot fail to draw to itself the solemn attention of the Churches' leaders in these times, that the very principle which was the subject of controversy at that period within the pale of the Church, has now been transferred from the arena of simple and abstract debate, to fight its way militantly in the courts of Cæsar himself—not dialectically between party and party in the Church judicatories, but practically in the outworks of secular contention—Auchterarder and Cardross being the Redan and Malakoff of the deeply interesting contest. Of the result there can be no doubt. It is simply a question of time. A few years hence the high and mighty position taken by Dr Lawson and his friends, will be maintained by all the friends of Him whose kingdom is not of this world. It may be claimed as one of the finest compliments to the United Presbyterian Church, that she has seldom lacked men to forewarn and prepare the world for the adoption of such measures as have greatly helped to bring glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will to men.

In the course of this controversy on the magistrate's power

in the Church, the Professor published a pamphlet, in which he strongly advocates the views of toleration and progress. His little work was entitled, 'Considerations on the Overture lying before the Associate Synod, respecting some alterations in the FORMULA concerning the power of the Civil Magistrate in matters of Religion; and the Obligation of our Covenants, National and Solemn League, on Posterity.' In eighty-three large duodecimo pages, closely printed, he discusses the whole question in dispute, with a dignity and confidence only equalled by its metaphysical and logical power. It is, indeed, a masterly production, and entitles him to be classed among the princes of theological polemics. There is not a cloud upon the view he takes from first to last; and, now that the din and dust of the contention have departed, we can conceive of nothing so imposing as the position he occupied throughout. He occupies it still, and posterity will ever be ready, with new laurel wreaths, to adorn this 'in memoria.' While tenaciously grasping indestructible principles, it teaches forbearance in all minor and non-essential matters. A style slightly colloquial, but without enfeebling familiarity, a rich vein of common sense levelling the abstruse to the humblest mind, a felicity and purity of illustration which profits even more than it pleases, and a beauteous spirit of charity baptizing every sentence, and breathing in every sentiment, give a character to the whole scarcely less unique than elevated and imperial. Compulsion and intolerance, defeated and discrowned, are made to hide their diminished heads, while ancestral bonds are seen to denude themselves of superannuation. His motto, from Vitringa, strikes the key-note to the whole, and deserves as much as ever to be studied in our day:—

'Majoribus nostris eam debemus reverentiam, ut quæ tradita ab ipsis posteritaté sint, ante non rejeciantur, quam dilligenter et accuratè expensa sint. Quo tamen officio si quis probe defunctus ex certissimis nihil-ominus argumentis calligat

eos errasse, tum existimamus, villissimi ac ignobilis animi esse, vel in iisdem cum ipsis pertinacitur perseverare, vel eos quavis modo velle palliare.'

Dr Lawson was well aware that his pamphlet would greatly irritate his opponents, and perhaps lead to schism in the body; but he acted under the direction of an enlightened conscience, and in obedience to principles which he held to be more important than ecclesiastical unity. He had perceived and acted upon Whately's proposition, before the Archbishop was out of the nursery, viz., that 'to give up everything that is worth contending about, in order to prevent hurtful contentions, is, for the sake of extirpating noxious weeds, to condemn the field to perpetual sterility.'

Dr William Peddie, in the memoir of his father, speaks of this 'brochure' as a work which exhibits 'perhaps more fully than any of the author's other writings, that depth and simplicity of thought, and that apostolic meekness of wisdom, for which the venerable Professor was so highly esteemed.' Dr Adam Thomson says, 'His first publication, if it did not give a new impulse to the public mind, contributed, at any rate, in no small degree to encourage that liberal turn of thinking now so common among the members of that ecclesiastical court of which he was long so distinguished an ornament.' Dr Brown pronounces these 'Considerations' to be 'a monument of his godly sincerity and meekness of wisdom; a valuable document as to one of the most important crises in the ecclesiastical history of this country.' He adds, 'The flood of malignant calumny and scurrility which was poured on Dr Lawson at this time would be incredible, did not literæ scriptæ manent.' Dr Balmer was often heard to speak loudly in its praise, as 'an eminently powerful and useful publication, transcending perhaps all he ever wrote.' Dr M'Kerrow, in his lucid history of the whole affair, states, 'If he had lived during the reign of Charles II., of heresy-suppressing memory, a pamphlet containing such sentiments on the power of the

magistrate would have been burned by the hands of the common hangman; and the author, in all probability, for his temerity in publishing it, would have been gibbeted at the Grassmarket.' Dr Cairns says, 'It pleads the cause of mutual forbearance on the points at issue, which still form the grounds of division among Scottish Presbyterians, with a power of argument and a sweetness of charity that almost entitle it to rank beside Robert Hall's "Terms of Communion."' This pamphlet had especially a most salutary and soothing effect in Stirlingshire and the adjacent counties, where some of the bitterest 'Old Light' men lived. Among the congregations in these shires the controversy raged keenly, and some of them were torn asunder in the most alarming manner. Men, women, and children rushed into the fray, and threatened an extensive secession. Dr Lawson, however, now not only cast oil upon the waters, but turned the tide completely in favour of toleration. Extracts from the 'Considerations,' racy and pithy, might have been given, but space forbids. The work remains among our archives, to be brought forward as power in reserve for the coming struggle. In the meantime, let it be labelled as the only stone from the brook which was ever slung by Dr Lawson, and which slew the Goliath of the day.

While this controversy lasted, pamphlets appeared on both sides, lustily advocating the different views. Among the earliest and most telling of these, was the Synod sermon of Dr Dick. He was then at Slateford, and only of a few years' standing in the ministry. The report of the committee appointed to consider Mr Frazer's overture was laid upon the table of the Synod which met in September 1795, and of which Synod Dr Dick was moderator. At the following meeting, in April 1796, he preached the sermon referred to, from the text, 'Hold fast the form of sound words,' and afterwards published it. He therein discusses the subject of Confessions of Faith, proves them to be necessary, and ex-

plains the duty of Christians with respect to them. He strongly urges forbearance in the matters then agitating the Church; and, in an appendix, he states that if '*forbearance*' cannot be exercised on these, there could be no field for its exercise but one so contracted as to make the exercise of it comparatively useless. This sermon produced great commotion among the advocates for things as they were. They were much irritated that one so young should presume to demand such forbearance, and particularly that this should have the weight and authority of the moderator of the Synod. But before a man of judgment and prudence could take this course, he must have been sure of the sympathy and approbation of his brethren; and Dr Dick was not mistaken. No doubt his views were attacked in bitter and unchristian replies: they were made the subject of complaint to the Synod itself; and when the Old Light party withdrew, it was formally stated by them that Dr Dick's sermon was one of their reasons for taking the step.

In connection with this fight of pamphlets, must be mentioned one by Dr Porteous, minister of the Established Church in Glasgow, and entitled, 'The New Light examined, or observations on the proceedings of the Associate Synod against their own Standards.' In this contemptible piece of slander the Synod was held up to scorn, and even charged with heresy and sedition; but this, like every other calumny, soon met its Nemesis. Dr Peddie, of Edinburgh, at once stood forth to chastise this accuser of the brethren; and right heartily and justly did he lay the rod on the fool's back. His famous satire—for such the reply may be called—and there is nothing in Juvenal himself that excels it—was entitled, 'A Defence of the Associate Synod against the charge of Sedition, addressed to Wm. Porteous, D.D. This reply contains a formal refutation of the charge of political disaffection. It assumes the charge to be unworthy of serious notice, and proceeds most successfully to demolish the argu-

ments by which it is supported; these being proved to be a series of mistakes, falsehoods, conceits, and conjectures. Burning, shrivelling, annihilating sarcasm was heaped upon and buried this little bottle-imp, which, with its clerical conjuror, was never in this strife seen or heard of again. Concerning this reply of Dr Peddie, it was testified that it was much admired at the time for its delicate yet keen satire, and the clearness, strength, and elegance of its reasoning. The late distinguished Dugald Stewart recommended it to his students as one of the most masterly pieces of classical sarcasm in our language; and Dr M'Kerrow most truthfully says, that, 'for dignified reproof, for caustic severity, for pointed and lucid statement, and for a thorough exposure of blundering and sophistical reasoning, it stands almost unrivalled in the annals of controversial warfare. The castigation was administered by the hand of a master, and must have been felt by the subject of it as dreadfully severe: but it was not more severe than merited.' 'It can scarcely be conceived,' says a venerable father in the Synod, 'what an effect it produced in the discomfiture of our enemies and in raising the spirit of our friends. It was boxed, with the other papers, in the process which arose out of the Old Light separation, and was frequently referred to by the lawyers in their pleadings, as well as by the judges. As for the poor man who had provoked such punishment, he immediately sunk into contempt under a weight of ridicule and scorn, and was forgotten and neglected.'

Dr Alexander, referring to it in his 'Life of Dr Wardlaw,' says, 'It drove him (Dr Porteous), with the scorched and blasted laurels of his shortlived popularity, into an obscurity from which he was wise enough never again to venture forth.' Dr Wardlaw, too, at that time a student at Selkirk, wrote the satirical poem, 'Porteousiana,' which, though never printed, had a large circulation among his friends. There is much keen and pure satire in it, and it lets out not a little of that

high-souled love of liberty for which, in after years, the author became so distinguished. Having entered on his theme, he says,—

> 'Athough the Rev. Mr Peddie
> Has answered you so well already,
> And given you such a hearty scrub,
> I can't refrain a passing rub.'

Having assumed that the favourite demon of Porteous was 'Malice,' he says,—

> 'The two their heads together laid,
> And schemed their cursed plot;
> The demon Malice dictated,
> And Dr Porteous wrote.'

Thus, at a time when principles we hold to be dearer than life were trembling in the balance, there were found to defend them men not wanting in any requisite to a fearless and irresistible contest for the truth. We may have good hope for the future, when these principles shall be again, and likely for the last time, put upon their trial. Lawson, Dick, and Peddie shall have their successors in the field. On not a few have their mantles fallen. But, even though a pseudo policy were for a season to confine the champions within the citadel of compromise, and were to dispose them to the use of expedient shibboleths, there is ample material reserved in these old stores, from out of which intolerance has already been met and mastered. In these times, when so many old writings are again printed and introduced to the public, a reprint of the three treatises at which we have been looking would be better than a mere speculation in trade. It might serve to brighten up the public mind on by far the most important question of the day.

The course of controversy, like other courses, runs not always smooth. Hence, Dr Lawson and his coadjutors soon met the reward of unflinching faithfulness: they became the

best abused men in their Synod; and no means was left untried by the leaders of the 'Old Light,' to heap accusation and reproach upon them. What between the 'EFFECTUAL REMEDIES,' prescribed by Mr Taylor, of Levenside, afterwards of Perth, and the 'SMOOTH STONES FROM THE BROOK,' slung by Mr Willis, of Greenock, afterwards of Stirling, the three heroes of the 'New Light' were sadly set upon. The Professor, from his official position, and the strength of it, drew upon himself the essence of intolerant wrath. His pamphlet received a similar honour to that given to Dr Dick's, and was made the subject of formal testimony-bearing on the part of the separating brethren. His orthodoxy, his loyalty, and his fitness for his office, were all vehemently and almost savagely assailed. And what was it that extorted such bitterness from his opponents? What was the heresy? Where was the treason? Simply in this, that he had maintained and defended the following thesis, and the paragraph is worthy to be written in letters of gold:—'It was never the sentiment of men approved in Christ, that any religious doctrine should be an article of communion among Christians. It was not the sentiment of Polycarp, or of Irenæus his friend, or of Luther or Calvin, the great reformers of the Church. It was not the sentiment of the great men of God who flourished in Scotland in her best times. It was not the sentiment of our fathers in the Secession. To those, if there be any, who will hold no Christian or ministerial communion but with men of the same judgment on every point with themselves, we may say as Constantine did to a Novatian Bishop at the Council of Nice, "Make a ladder, and climb up to heaven by yourselves."'[1] He met, however, all attacks with dignified silence, leaving his own and his brethren's publications to do their work quietly and efficiently; and they did it. The Church was not rent in pieces, after all: only a few fiery and factious spirits were ejected, and the Secession rested.

[1] Considerations, etc., p. 9. Second Edition.

The Professor was urged to reply to his opponents, whom Dr Wardlaw, in his satire, represents as

> . . . . . 'Poor senseless fillies,
> From Lawson gone to Willie Willis;'

but he refused to do so. He knew the true philosophy of mere party spirit, and kept silence, believing, with the liberal Prelate of Dublin, that 'many a one is so far gone in party as to be *proof-proof*, and cares no more for facts than the leviathan does for spears.' Nothing could provoke him to render railing for railing. 'I have more than once heard,' he writes to one of his friends, 'that things are said in my name very remote from the truth; but I paid no regard to them, because I was persuaded they would make no impression, or very shortlived, on any person whose good opinion I wished to cultivate. I had read a story when I was a boy, in an old author, called Valerius Maximus, which I have never forgot, and which I consider as a rule for my conduct. Plato, hearing that one of his friends had aspersed his character, replied, "I will endeavour to live so as that nobody will believe him." There is no part of my character about which I am less solicitous than my reputation for integrity. I am pretty certain, from my own consciousness, joined with the testimony of my father concerning my years of childhood, that, since I could use my tongue, I have never polluted it with a wilful lie.' His reply to Mr Walker, of Mauchline, who had been one of his students, is very characteristic: 'All we,' said Mr Walker, 'who have studied at Selkirk, are determined to abide by you, and defend you as best we can.' 'Well, then,' replied the Professor, 'the best defence you can make is to preach well.' It was the *truth*, and not himself, that he cared for. Knowing his firm purpose not to reply to the scurrilous personal abuse to which he was for a time subjected, his brethren, at a meeting of Synod, were rather taken by surprise, when, in alluding to a certain pamphlet, he said, 'I mean to answer it.' 'What, Doctor!' one said, 'will

you reply to a production so false, and so full of spite?' 'Yes, I shall,' said he; 'I preached a sermon last Sabbath on lying, and I intend to publish it.' When the controversy was at its height, he went to assist at the communion in Glasgow. He was to officiate on the Friday evening; and the weather being very tempestuous, the audience was small. A friend came into the vestry after the service, who was afraid lest Dr Lawson should attribute the smallness of the audience to an indication of displeasure in the public, and assured him it was entirely owing to the weather. The good man, first of all, repeated a stanza in Latin, in which there was a double allusion to the storm and to the prejudice, and then added, 'It is but a little cloud, and will soon blow past.' 'Why,' it was asked again, 'do you not repel these foul and slanderous attacks?' 'Why,' said he, quoting the language of the heathen philosopher, 'why should I kick an ass because an ass has kicked me?' When it was hinted that the epithet he had used might be appropriated by his most virulent assailant, he said, 'I will be sorry indeed if he do so; and if he should think that I applied it to him, I shall never use the language again.'

The following documents, worthy of preservation, will be read with interest, as manifesting the precious sympathy of his brethren with him under the calumnious treatment to which he had been exposed for his noble stand in defence of religious toleration:—

'DUNBLANE, *March* 28, 1799.

'VERY DEAR SIR,—Being assembled at Dunblane on a friendly visit, it has occurred to us to write you a few lines, and to assure you of what you will readily believe, our high esteem and warm regard. You have been dear to us all ever since we had the pleasure of your acquaintance; but our esteem and affection have been increased of late by the appearances which you have been called to make

in the defence of truth, in which ability, candour, and meekness are so conspicuous. Our indignant feelings, we acknowledge, are roused by the uncandid and malignant abuse with which you are loaded in certain infamous publications. But you know that you are reproached for the name of Christ, and you cannot be unhappy. The great Head Himself feels the persecution you suffer. May He grant repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth, to those men who are its authors.

'Our best wishes, dear sir, always attend you. May your labours in the cause of Christ and mankind be marked with signal triumph over the opposing legions of hell and earth! You have the approbation of those whom you love and esteem; you have an approving mind; and we have no doubt of your being supported by the well-grounded hope of the approbation of Him to whose service and honour you have devoted your life and talents.

'Accept, dear Sir, this spontaneous expression of esteem and regard from your very affectionate friends and brethren,

'MICHAEL GILFILLAN, Dunblane.
DAVID GREIG, Lochgelly.
JAMES HUSBAND, Dunfermline.
WILLIAM HADDIN, Limekilns.
JAMES MACFARLANE, Dunfermline.
JOHN SMART, Stirling.
HENRY BELFRAGE, Falkirk.
JAMES HAY, Kinross.'

'*P.S.*—We have not yet had the pleasure of seeing Mr Fletcher, but are just setting out to visit him.'

'*Rosebank, by Stirling, March* 28, 1799.—MY DEAR BROTHER, —Bodily indisposition precluded me from the pleasure of accompanying my brethren in their friendly excursion this day to Dunblane, but I now most cordially concur with them

in the above; and am, with real regard and esteem, most affectionately yours, 'ROB. CAMPBELL, JR.'

'AUCHTERMUCHTY, 11*th June* 1799.

'REV. DEAR SIR,—We have observed with grief the reproach which of late you have suffered on account of your principles and conduct. We consider you as suffering for righteousness' sake, in which you are conformed to some of the most excellent characters. When we reflect upon the place which you hold in our esteem and affection, and the station you occupy in the Church of God, we think it our duty to express our high approbation of your opinions and conduct, the sorrow which we feel on account of the unwarrantable manner in which you have been attacked, and our earnest desire that you may have comfort from God, and be long preserved for a blessing to your family and to the Church.

'JEDH. AIKMAN, Perth.
DAVID HEPBURN, Newburgh.
JOHN JAMIESON, Scone.
JAMES DICK.
JOHN RAE.
GEORGE WIGTON.
JOHN STEWART, Liverpool.'

The Rev. George Lawson, Selkirk.

The conduct of his students at this time is also worthy of notice. Disgusted as well as offended with the attacks made upon their Professor, they unanimously sent up to the Synod a most interesting and valuable representation,—a representation full of promise to the future interests of the Church, and a promise which was most honourably fulfilled in after years, when these students, as ministers of the Gospel, were called upon to act out the principles of religious liberty in their own vocation, and to defend them when exposed to misrepresentation or to peril.

Fortunately for the interest of this memoir, a few of Dr Lawson's letters have been found, written about the time of these discussions and dissensions to his friend Dr Kidston, of Glasgow. They have been reserved till now, as, from the slight sketch of matters here given, the allusions in them will be the easier understood. With these are intermingled a few others from Dr Husband, with whom, upon the subject of the 'overture,' the Professor was in frequent correspondence. Dr Husband, indeed, all through the controversy, was the most eloquent and powerful pleader at the bar of the Synod in favour of the principles of religious toleration. He did not, however, advocate the extreme views of the more 'advanced men,' but stuck to the resolution that was ultimately carried.

Dr Lawson to Dr Kidston.

'SELKIRK, *April* 1, 1796.

'DEAR WILLIAM,—I received yours this week, but have been little at home since I received it till this day. That part of it which relates to the frequent dispensation of the Lord's Supper I will pass over till I see you, with my thanks for the book you sent me.

'I should certainly have shown all due respect to the desire of the Presbytery respecting Mr Currie's examination, but I have reason to believe that he is not at present in this country. A few weeks ago I was in his father's house, which is six miles from Selkirk; and he told me that he was then residing either at Lanark, or perhaps, rather, at Glasgow. He is a weaver (of what kind I have forgot). Mr M'Millan, merchant, or Walter Gowanlock, from our place, will be able, I suppose, to direct you where to find him. I know that he bore testimony in a civil court to the guilt of the woman in question; but I am not sure whether I could have prevailed on his father to have permitted him to do it again, before us, at this distance of time, without seeing his former deposition.

I am sorry for Mr Wyllie's affliction. He was a young

man for whom I entertained, and still entertain, a high esteem. I hope he will not be left to revolt from the doctrine of the Gospel. God preserve us from mistaking our path in these days of clouds and thick darkness.

'I am sorry to hear of the contentions we are likely to have at the next meeting of Synod. I wish our zealous brethren would maturely consider the consequences of their opposition to the overture, if it should be attended with success. I think it would be easy to prove that none ought to oppose it, who are not well convinced from the Word of God that their brethren of opposite sentiments deserve not only to be deposed and excommunicated, but even hanged. It is clear that, according to the national covenant, every man is to be esteemed a rebel against the king who does not profess his satisfaction with the doctrine of our old Confession of Faith; and this Confession, more clearly than the Westminster one, asserts the compulsory power of the magistrate in matters of religion.

'I am writing my thoughts on the overture; and I believe some brother better qualified than I might do service to our body by a publication on the subject. But it would be "periculosæ plenum opus aleæ."—I am, yours affectionately,

'G. LAWSON.'

Dr Lawson to Dr Kidston.

'SELKIRK, *March* 1797.

'DEAR WILLIAM,—I am glad to hear that your opinion coincides with mine about Mr Willis. I was this week at Kelso, in company with Messrs Hall, Greig, Elder, and Young. We were all vexed at hearing, by a letter from the north, that the Presbytery designed to libel Mr Willis, and agreed in opinion, that it would probably serve his views if he were forcibly driven out from us. They all desired me to let you know their sentiments.

'After all, I know not what consequences might attend a

meeting between Mr Willis and me in the west. Perhaps altercations might take place that might lay me under the necessity of libelling him. For this and other reasons, I would gladly be excused from coming to you at this time; and I promise, if you can provide an assistant at present, that I will be ready afterwards to assist you, if the Lord will.

'I wish, if possible, to have every reproach cast upon me to die a natural death. The famous Dr Boerhaave was of the same mind. He never troubled himself to confute calumnies: for, he said, they are sparks which, if you blow them up, will kindle into a flame; if you let them alone, they will expire.

'I should be glad to see you at Glasgow some time in the course of the year. But whether I see you or not, I will always rejoice to hear of your welfare, and happiness, and success in the work of the Lord. I am happy to hear that the two brethren, of whom you spoke, take no part with Mr Willis. It was what I expected from their good sense. It seems strange, that a performance designed to maintain Presbyterian principles should be such a flagrant violation of them; and that a man so exceedingly zealous for the covenants of our fathers, should be so little conscientious in observing his own personal engagements as to libel me before the world, without using the constitutional means for so long a space to bring me to repentance, or to procure my expulsion from the body, when he alleges that I ought to be excommunicated.

'I know not yet what effect his performance may have in this place, where I have just now heard of its making its appearance; but I know that my name and my usefulness are in the hand of a gracious God.—I am, yours affectionately,

'G. LAWSON.'

Dr Husband to Dr Lawson.

'PERTH, *August* 3, 1796.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your very agreeable favour was put into my hand, during the first psalm before the sermon, on

the third Sabbath of July. I was obliged to put it instantly into my pocket, and to turn away my attention from one of my best earthly friends, to Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself. I took the first opportunity of perusing it. The very sensible pleasure it gave me had a mixture of regret, occasioned by the absence of the writer, with whom, on that occasion, we used to enjoy so sweet counsel. I did not fail to mention you to all the friends who were present, who felt in the same manner as myself. Our assistants were, Messrs Thine, Waters, Greig, Baird, and H. Belfrage. Mr Wardlaw, too, with his son, added to our agreeable society. And all of them joined in expressing sincere wishes for your welfare, as well as regret for your absence. If the Lord spare and prosper us till next year, I hope Mr Lawson will do me a greater favour than write me a letter in the month of July.

'I have heard nothing since I was at the sacrament at Edinburgh, about the manuscript relating to the overture. I understood that Mr Peddie was to get it prepared for the press. By the partial perusal which I gave it, I should think it exceedingly fitted to answer the end intended. Something, I am convinced, ought to be done for enlightening the public mind. Some of our brethren on the opposite side are, I understand, as violent in their public declamations as they were in the year 1747. What may be the result I do not know. One thing is certain, that no dread of consequences should make us dishonest men. And though to forbear one another in love should be scouted ever so violently, it is a part of the testimony of Jesus, which, I hope, will never be abandoned. My own opinions on the subject are the productions of so commonplace a genius, that I cannot see them to be worthy of the public eye. Something, however, must be done, and I have sometimes thought of enlightening at least our own congregation on the subject; but I hope to have something better than any-

thing of my own to put into their hands. Mr Dick's sermon is excellent in its way; but we need something that will enter more particularly into the subject; and I am persuaded what you have written is fitted to have much weight with the public mind.—Yours, most cordially,

'JAMES HUSBAND.'

Dr Husband to Dr Lawson.

'DUNFERMLINE, 13*th March* 1797.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . . The part of the pamphlet which I did not see in manuscript, pleases me as much as that which I saw; and I make no doubt but something further from your pen will be of use. I can see no objection against your executing your purpose. The people need *enlightening* very much. Mr Peddie writes me, that you are making converts on their side of the water. With us you are, at least, confirming people in their attachment to truth and moderation; and I make no doubt but you will be the means of preventing many who have not yet pledged themselves from pursuing violent measures. Some of our people have gone so far, that I question if the reasoning of an angel would bring them round. Yet, even of our violent people, some have become more calm; and I have even reason to think that there are some conversions.

'We have met with a good deal of trouble. A paper of a very mischievous nature was a good while in circulation before I knew of it. The subscribers condemned Mr Macfarlane and me as having renounced our ordination vows, because we do not mention the Covenants at baptism, and pledged themselves to abide by a minority in the Synod, should the majority go against their views. I was obliged to address the people on the subject, which, I believe, has had a good effect. The papers are no more heard of. Some have withdrawn their names, others confess they were wrong, though a number, I believe, are still obstinate. The zeal of a

number of people respectable for character and good sense is raised; and one very comfortable circumstance in our situation is, that I believe a great number of our session are in our own way. In short, the matter, though bad, perhaps does not look so ill as it once did; and I am not without my hopes that a great majority of our congregation will go the right way.

'I am not without my apprehension that the overture, in its present form, either will not pass, or if it do, that it will produce an extensive breach. Though, to me, still the best measure hitherto proposed, it is, of all others, to many the most obnoxious. Multitudes are pledged against it, and multitudes do not understand it. The spirit of it ought, I think, never to be departed from; but a number of its friends are of opinion that something may be obtained under a different and less obnoxious form. There are liberal principles in our testimony which it is proposed to bring forward, and set the Formula in the light of them. A meeting is proposed to take place at Queensferry, with a view to digest the measure. A number, I am told, are to attend. I am not yet invited, but I expect an invitation. O that you were there. Write me if you could think of coming.

'I am much honoured by your expressions of regard. Amidst my afflictions it is a consolation that I have friends who are inferior to none in every kind of worth. But may I look higher than the best of earthly consolations, and be enabled to pursue the path of duty through good report and bad report.

'I hope to see your supplement in a short time.—I am, my dear friend, yours always, 'JAMES HUSBAND.'

Dr Husband to Dr Lawson.

'DUNFERMLINE, *January* 2, 1799.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have often of late reproached myself with ingratitude in not replying to your kind letter, in which you take such friendly notice of my providential escape

when in imminent danger. To the God of my life I desire to ascribe the praise, and am sensible that I ought to feel the obligation to devote my life wholly to His service.

'I paid all the attention in my power to the particulars mentioned in your letter. Copies of your sermon I presented in your name to the friends you mention. I also mentioned to Messrs Greig, Peddie, and R. Hall your grant of supply to the congregations in the north, which I hope has been attended to.

'Your sermon I read with pleasure and unqualified approbation. How did it surprise me to see it attacked with such asperity as heterodox and Arminian; but on second thoughts it did not appear so surprising that it should be treated in such a manner by persons whose principles seem to be those of *Fatalism*. I understand you have written a reply, which I hope to see in the next number of the Magazine.

'There is a good deal of asperity in the criticism. But it is mildness, and gentleness, and fair representation when compared with "A Smooth Stone from the Brook." I dare not give myself scope in writing as I feel, at the thoughts of such low and unmannerly abuse. How unworthy of one under the name of a Christian minister! Such despicable Billingsgate should, I think, defeat its own end. That cause is much to be suspected that needs to be defended by such weapons. Do you think it worthy of reply? I am sure you are incapable of answering it in its own style, and *mere abuse* cannot be reasoned with.

'There is just now before me a story of Melancthon: perhaps you have met with it; but lest you should not, I shall transcribe it, because it seems to be important. That great and amiable man being the subject of much virulent abuse for his part in the Reformation, was strongly urged to publish a vindication of his conduct. "I will answer you," said he, "as my little daughter did me. She had one day been sent on an errand, and stayed much longer than she ought to

have done. I met her on the street, and said to her, 'Now, child, what will you say to your mother when she chides you for staying so long?' 'I will say *nothing*,' replied the poor child."

'The above story I have extracted from "Dr Aitken's Letters to his Son," in which there is an admirable one on reply in controversy. I shall transcribe two or three sentences. "A writer publishes his sentiments on a controverted point in politics or theology, and supports them by the best arguments in his power. A hot-headed champion rises on the opposite side, who in print styles his notions impious or seditious, his arguments trivial and absurd, insults his person, vilifies his sense and learning, and imputes to him the worst motives. What matter is there in all this for an answer? The writer does not mean to disavow his opinions because an opponent thinks ill of them. His arguments are not refuted by the abuse of one who, perhaps, from incapacity or ignorance, is utterly unable to comprehend them."

'I hope you do not think me intrusive with my opinion. I do not mean to say that nothing more should be published on the subject in dispute. Perhaps your essay on "After Vows making Enquiry" would now be seasonable. You left it with me, but I certainly gave it to Mr Greig, to whom I shall mention it the first time I see him. I must have another reading of it.

'You are meeting with the same treatment as almost every man has met with who had the honesty and courage to attack prejudice and bigotry. But you have powerful support. You have the approbation of those whose approbation you covet, of your own mind, and, above all, of Him to whom you have devoted your talents and your life, and you know that your labour will not be in vain in the Lord.

'Farewell.—My dear Sir, yours most cordially.

'JAMES HUSBAND.

Dr Lawson to Dr Kidston.

'SELKIRK, *May* 1799.

'DEAR WILLIAM,—Yesterday I received your letter, and am duly sensible of the regard you express for me when you so earnestly desire my assistance at your communion. But I hope, upon consideration, you will agree with me that it would not be expedient for me to appear in Glasgow, where such endeavours are used to destroy my usefulness. Let the noise that has been raised sink into silence, and then, if the Lord will, I shall make another journey to you with pleasure. I certainly would think my journey well bestowed for your sake, as well as for your father's, since it would give you pleasure.

'I have no intention at present to libel my neighbour, who has used such freedoms with my character. I know and am persuaded that the Lord will send from heaven and deliver me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up.

'I suspect that Mr Willis has an intention of leaving us, and that it would gratify him to be libelled. He surely cannot intend to live in communion with me, and several others of the brethren, without seeing a change in our conduct, which he cannot expect. If he keeps communion with us without a very great change either in himself or in us, his practice must most evidently give the lie to his writings.

'When I saw his first number, I considered with myself, that Mr Willis had one design and the devil another, and that God had a design different from both. Let us endeavour, if possible, to disappoint the devil, and to endure chastisement and trial from God as becometh Christians.

'I do not think it difficult to bear reproach as a stoic, but to bear it as becometh saints, we need the grace of the Spirit of love and prayer. How can we find in our hearts to pray for pardon, if we do not forgive?

'David and Paul are excellent teachers of charity towards

those that wrong us, and why should we not at least endeavour, through Divine mercy, to exercise charity to our enemies? Let them curse when the Lord hath bidden them. It may be the Lord will requite us good for their cursing.

'It will oblige me much if you will give a good advice or admonition to Sandy, as he may happen to need it, or to ask him what he has been learning from the Bible or other books.

'I am sorry for the distress of your brother. It is to be hoped that it will do him good in his latter end. We need all the troubles that we endure, and they will all of them be useful to us through prayer, and through the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

'I would have been glad to hear what impression the pamphlets are making in your neighbourhood, and whether any of the brethren are likely to take part with Mr Willis. Mr Anderson will be in Glasgow within two weeks. By him I hope to hear from you. May God restore your brother's health, and may He grant peace to His Church.—I am, yours, with cordial affection, 'G. LAWSON.'

'I will be glad to hear that the zeal of my quondam pupils for my reputation has not transported them beyond the bounds of moderation. I should be glad, likewise, to hear how our young students in Glasgow proceed with their studies. Mr Brown was not in good health when he left us. You will be able to inform me if he is quite recovered. I don't know if you have been informed concerning the health of Mr Beatton, a friend of Mr Shaw. My sincere wishes for the health and prosperity of my Glasgow friends will not be doubted.

Dr Lawson to Dr Kidston.

'SELKIRK, *August* 1799.

'DEAR WILLIAM,—Your father is now well, as far as I am informed.

'I wrote a letter to you two weeks ago, but missed the opportunity of sending it. I should have been glad to see my book on the Proverbs, because it contains all that I remember to have said to the students about politics.

'If you have it by you, and would turn to the chapter about Kings, you might be able to tell your friends what these seditious principles are which I have taken pains to inculcate. If it could be safely sent, I should be glad to see it.

'I have no present intention of answering Mr Taylor's book; but I have begun to write some observations on the charges which he lays against me. If I can find leisure to finish them, I propose to have them in Edinburgh next week to meet emergencies.

'I shall be happy to resign my post when the good of the Church may be promoted by it. At present I think it more advisable to hold it, if the Synod permits me, and to bear the odium that seems to attend it till it can be transferred to another in a state less liable to that incumbrance. But I will not vote for Mr Taylor as my successor till he renounces his opinion of the servility that ought to be annexed to it.

'I have not time at present to trouble you with a long letter. God grant peace to His Church, and wisdom to our Supreme Court.—I am, yours affectionately,

'G. LAWSON.'

Dr Husband to Dr Lawson.

'DUNFERMLINE, *August* 22, 1799.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—You will receive this by Mr Smith, a well-behaved modest young man, and I believe exercised to godliness.

'I am happy to be informed by Mr Greig that you intend being at the Synod. Your presence may be necessary on various accounts. United counsel is necessary at the crisis. It may be necessary for the Synod, and you in particular, explicitly to contradict some insidious charges brought by

Taylor in his pamphlet, particularly as to a charge of introducing innovations without end, than which there cannot be a more barefaced calumny. The men are left totally to disregard truth, and decency, and candour in their publications. I trust the Synod will firmly maintain its ground, and repel the calumnies with a becoming indignation. There seems to be but one mind among the friends of forbearance to let the preamble stand untouched at this meeting of Synod.

'An approving mind, the approbation of those whom you esteem, and, above all, the approbation of the great Lord Himself, are your support under unrighteous abuse.—My dear Sir, yours, etc., 'JAMES HUSBAND.'

Dr Lawson to Dr Kidston.

'SELKIRK, *Sept.* 1799.

'DEAR WILLIAM,—I congratulate you on the restoration of your father's health. I hope you will yet have the pleasure for many years of a father on earth. But we must derive our chief pleasures from our heavenly Father. There is none, even on earth, to be desired besides Him.

'It is not my design to write answers to any of the books that have been written against me. Mr T—— is perhaps worthy of a little more respect than some others of them. But I find it almost impossible to give him credit for his own belief of some of the things that he writes. I have it at present in contemplation to publish a few sermons, that those who wish to know may have an opportunity of knowing what my sentiments are about the Old Testament, and about some other points of religion. I wish I had beside me the written sermon that I saw at Glasgow. Perhaps it might make its appearance with some others.

'It will be my prayer that God may give you peace at the meeting of Synod, and preserve you all from intemperate heat and language. My absence may, I think, prevent the saying of some things that ought not to be said. I should be glad

to hear from Edinburgh how Mrs Scott, at Aberdeen, now is. Perhaps Mr Mather may be in this country without deputation. Speak to him, and to Mr Elder, or engage him to preach at Stow.—I am, yours affectionately,

'G. LAWSON.'

The allusions in the following letter of the late Bailie Wardlaw, of Glasgow (father of Dr Ralph Wardlaw), to the unhinging spirit of these times, justify its insertion here, independent of its interesting references to one of Dr Lawson's most eminent students:—

Bailie Wardlaw to Dr Lawson.

'GLASGOW, *Dec.* 18, 1799.

'MY DEAR SIR,—When I look back to the date of your late letter, I am almost ashamed now to acknowledge receipt of it. The truth is, I thought, by visiting you at the Synod, to have saved myself the labour, and you the expense, of a letter. In this, however, I was disappointed; for you were not where I certainly thought you ought to have been, to strengthen the hands of your brethren in their conflict with bigotry and folly. The explosion has now taken place, and seems to produce, at least in some places, more serious effects than were apprehended, though I hope it is not so with respect to yourself, of which I shall be glad to hear at your leisure, as well as of the health of your family, since the time of your late heavy affliction, in which we most tenderly sympathize with you. I hope you have now, by the blessing of God, attained in some degree that calm and pleasing serenity of mind, which the Gospel alone can produce, and of which no event of life ought ever to deprive us. I well know, however, that this, to a fond afflicted parent, is a very hard lesson. May God "work in you and in me, to will and to do, and also to *bear*, all His good pleasure!"

'In allusion to the present state of matters in our society,

you are pleased to express a friendly concern respecting the state of my own mind, and the views and intentions of my son Ralph. With regard to him, you will, I trust, agree with me in allowing him full and entire liberty to judge and act for himself. I know in general that he is somewhat at a stand, and seems disposed to weigh things maturely before he forms any final attachment. And this, I think, is just as it ought to be. His situation is materially different from yours and mine, especially in one important respect, wherein I am indeed neither on a level with yourself nor with him, occupying as I do only the station of a private Christian. To us who have been long in connection with a religious society, it may appear our duty to bear with many things which it may be equally the duty of a new interest to endeavour to avoid.

'The footing you stand on with respect to the Formula, is, in my opinion, far from being a cleanly one; and it appears to me that a minister, who would wish to follow the convictions of his own mind, will now find himself more embarrassed than ever, because the malcontents, however unreasonable, see a wide door opened to receive them by the Old Associate Presbytery. The more frequent dispensation of the Lord's Supper is now, therefore, obviously at a greater distance than ever, as well as the introduction of evangelical New Testament hymns into our public psalmody,—two things, so necessary and desirable in the eye of reason and Scripture, that it is no wonder if any thinking liberal-minded Christian should hesitate to join a society where these, with other objects of reformation, must apparently be for ever relinquished. From these few hints, my dear sir, you may partly discern the present state of my own mind; and that of my son Ralph's, I have reason to believe, is not much different.

'What may be his final determination it is impossible for me at present to say. But I think, from his natural calmness

of temper, as well as other considerations, it is not likely he will take any sudden or decisive step. Friends here are all well, and join in best wishes to you and your family.—I am, your affectionate friend and humble servant,

'Wm. Wardlaw.'

Only once, during the 'Old Light Controversy,' did he experience some annoyance in his session. His views upon the magistrate's power *circa sacra*, as expressed in his pamphlet, brought upon him the vilest abuse. It might have been expected, that, under such scurrilous attacks, he would have been secure of the sympathy of his session and people; and, for the most part, they were with him. A few, however, were against him, especially in his views of the obligations of the national covenants on posterity. Some members of his session, in particular, were rather bitterly opposed to him. They drew up a 'representation and petition,' to the effect that the Synod should sanction no change whatever in any of the questions of the *Formula*. This paper was laid upon the session's table, and read. The moderator then, calmly but firmly, told them that if they carried the matter to the Presbytery for transmission to the Synod, he would at once demit his charge and emigrate to America. This ended the matter at once. He afterwards told Mr Sandy, of Gorebridge (who had this story from the Professor himself), that the non-transmission of said paper displeased some of the private members of the church; and that one of them, after the Synod had decided the whole case, came to him, and, in rather high temper, found fault with him for the part he had acted in the controversy; he even went the length of indorsing one of the slanders of the Old Light men, that Dr Lawson denied the authority of the Old Testament. 'I told him,' added the Doctor, 'that I did not deny the authority of any part of the Old Testament, and referred, as a proof, to the circumstance that I was at that very time lecturing upon a portion of it;

and, moreover, that if I had been ordained minister of the congregation on Old Testament principles, as he understood them, I should possess a right to come down upon him and the other members for the tenth of all their possessions.' Whereupon the vexatious intruder took his leave.

He was never what is called 'a church-court man.' The meetings of his Presbytery he regularly attended, and there his counsels were much appreciated. It was very seldom, however, that he made his appearance at the Synod. He urged his deafness and somewhat sensitive bodily constitution as his apology. At the same time, he maintained his interest in everything that affected the interest of the Redeemer's Church. The only instance, of a minor kind, of his taking part in Synodical business, was when his son George, then minister at Galashiels, received two calls — the one from Dumfries, and the other from Bolton in Lancashire. At that time all such calls were referred to, and decided by, the Synod. He was averse to his son's translation, and became the advocate of the Galashiels congregation. As the Hall was in session when the matter came up for judgment, he sent a letter and representation to the moderator, in which he powerfully pled the cause of the Galashiels people. The Synod, however, decided that his son be removed to Bolton.

With these exceptions, the calm tenor of Dr Lawson's pastoral and literary life was seldom, if ever, broken in upon by the strivings of the potsherds of the earth. Not that he was an uninterested spectator of what was transpiring in the world, but that he had no mind to mix himself up with the politics of the day, still less with the minor polemics of the neighbourhood. On one occasion, however, he did become the subject of a vile calumny, that drew from him the following letter to Mrs Plummer, the lady of the Sheriff of the county—a letter worthy of the Christian and the patriot. His son, the Rev. George Lawson, has given an account of the affair, from which we learn, that the gentleman with

whom the conversation (alluded to in the letter) took place, afterwards became one of his father's highest admirers and warmest friends; and that till his own death, at a recent period, he showed the greatest respect and friendship for all the Lawson family: also, that when his brother Andrew died, he said that he was the best man he had ever known, except his father. The same person told Mr George, that he considered Dr Lawson's decease as partaking more of a translation than of death. The allusion to Lord Howe's victory (June 1, 1794) shows the time to which this letter refers—for the letter itself has no date. Mr Lawson informs us that he is not aware that his father ever re-wrote a letter or a discourse; but that his handwriting was so peculiar, that when he addressed persons not familiar with it, some member of the family often transcribed the letter in a more legible hand. Thus, some of the originals are still preserved. Mr Lawson says, 'Mrs Plummer's message to my father was, I believe, a friendly hint, that he would need to be very cautious in his conversation on political topics, lest he should bring himself into trouble. It was founded on some report which had been made to the Sheriff, concerning the conversation referred to. Mr Plummer was the immediate predecessor of Sir Walter Scott in the Shrievalty of Selkirkshire.' The allusion, towards the close of the letter, to his 'truthfulness' is remarkable, not only for its own sake, but as illustrative of a very decided feature in his character—intense sensitiveness upon the subject of his personal integrity. He could at any time bear accusations against his opinions or his convictions, and care not to reply a word; but even an insinuation against his principles or character as a Christian man, he could not away with: he met such with instant and emphatic self-defence.

Dr Lawson to Mrs Plummer.

'Madam,—I am sorry to hear that a gentleman, with whom I travelled a mile or two a few weeks ago, told you

some things concerning my conversation with him that had a tendency to lessen me in your opinion. I am persuaded I said nothing to him that would have displeased you, if you had been present with us. If I differed from your sentiments, I believe you would have thought the differences such as every man will cheerfully bear in another, whom he does not wish to treat as a slave. And if I did wrong in speaking things disagreeable to my companion, he ought to have the blame, as he used means to fish out my opinions on subjects on which I was not disposed to discourse. I told him, I think, more than once, that I had for some time resolved to abstain as much as possible from speaking on political subjects.

'I believe I yet retain in my memory the greatest part of the ideas interchanged in that conversation. It would be tedious to you, as well as to myself, to give you a full account of it. But, if I mistake not, that which passed concerning the Reformers in Selkirk, was most likely to give him umbrage. He told me that some of them had changed their sentiments, and gave me the proof of it, that on the King's birth-day they had declared they wished to use no other method but that of petitioning to obtain a reform in the representation. You will not be surprised that I was nettled with this observation, when I had the fullest assurance which one man can have of another's mind, that such of them as I am acquainted with never dreamed of any other means of obtaining their wishes. I answered him to this purpose, and told him at the same time that I favoured their views, and that my ideas were not changed in the least degree, although I thought meetings for that purpose would at this time be very unseasonable. Something was said of the French which I disapproved; and I believe yourself would have done so. I certainly have no temptation or wish to be their advocate; but I believe they are not worse than the devil, and yet the prince of angels durst not bring a railing accusation against him.

'The arms lately found about Edinburgh and other places were another subject of conversation; and I was urged to give my opinion about that affair, although I believe little was then known about it. All that I could say was, that if they were made for the purpose then spoken of, the persons deserved to be hanged. I could not give an unqualified opinion on a subject concerning which I had very little information, and part of that little information almost incredible.

'I myself had introduced the subject of Lord Herries' engagement, that I might be informed by my companion whether any news had come to Selkirk concerning the event of it. I was on my way from Kelso, where it was only known that the fleets had come to an action. At Jedburgh, on my return, I had only heard that only one or two ships on each side were engaged.

'But I beg pardon for this tedious recital, and omit other things that passed. I am fully persuaded that you will not easily believe me to be so very wicked and weak, as wilfully and knowingly to contradict in private companies what I say in public before many hundreds of people. A man who was to say and unsay the same things in private companies, must in a few months make himself very contemptible; but a minister who contradicts in private company what he said in the public assembly, must make himself despicable and detestable in six weeks. What is said in public sermons or prayers, is in effect said in every company where the speaker will ordinarily be. His words, if they were not heard, were probably heard of by all his companions; and they are understood to have been spoken in the name of the Most High God, or to have been addressed to Him in these solemn services where the minister was engaged. He who can have the audacity to approach the throne of God, and pray for the king and the peace of the country, while he endeavours at other times to disturb the government, will be considered

by the most ignorant person in the company as a man in whom there is no faith, and of whom no hold can be taken but by binding or hanging him.

'I am obliged to your candour for suggesting to me the propriety of addressing you in my own vindication; and I have never hitherto put myself to any trouble to undeceive those who have been tempted to question my behaviour, although I have more than once heard of things said in my name that were very remote from truth; but I paid no regard to them, because I was persuaded that they would make no impression, or a very shortlived one, upon any person whose good opinion I wished to cultivate. I had read a story, when I was a boy, in an old author, called Valerius Maximus, which I have never forgot, and which I considered a rule for my conduct. Plato, hearing that one of his friends aspersed his character, replied, "I will endeavour to live so as that nobody shall believe him."

'There is no part of my character about which I am less solicitous than my reputation for integrity. I am pretty certain, from my own consciousness, joined with the testimony of my father concerning my childhood, that since I could use my tongue I have never polluted it with a wilful lie.

'I know Mr Plummer will not allow me to be stabbed in the dark; and I trust in God, who preserveth the faithful, and plenteously rewardeth the proud doers. I believe that He will suffer no evil to befall me, without turning it to my advantage.—Your humble servant, 'GEORGE LAWSON.

'*P.S.*—I was at no loss to know the conversation alluded to in your message.'

It was some time in 1803 that England was almost driven from her propriety by the terror of an invasion from France. The first Napoleon, whom Dr Lawson was wont to call 'the

present ruler of France,' had just raised an immense army, which he boastingly ycleped 'the army of England.' He encamped his hosts at Boulogne, and a large 'flotilla' was prepared to carry them over the Channel to 'perfidious Albion's' rock-bound shores. Dr Lawson was too ardent a lover of his country to be unobservant of such signs of the times. He noticed them at this period in his pulpit services. He preached a sermon to the point from Daniel xi. 32, 'The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits,' in which he cheered the hearts of the people, and propounded the highest style of patriotism. This sermon was afterwards published, under the title of 'The Influence of Religion on Military Courage.' The Hall was in session at the time, and the students caught fire from the old man's eloquence, and met to consider what steps they should take to prove that, though seceders from an Established Church, they were ready to fight for their king and country. They were the more set upon this, that disaffection to government was known to be prevalent in certain districts, that Dissenters were regarded by some alarmists as disloyal, and even suspected of sympathy with Buonaparte. Dr Lawson and his students, therefore, now stood up as the friends of loyalty, order, and peace. The volunteer movement was then, as it is now, in great vogue, and nothing would satisfy the students but to join in it: not content with the 'pulpit drum-ecclesiastic,' they must add the carnal weapons wherewith to smite the carnal foe. Accordingly, at their first meeting, it was unanimously and enthusiastically resolved that they should acquaint Lord Napier, the Lord-Lieutenant of Selkirkshire, with their wishes. At a subsequent meeting, an address to his Lordship was read and approved of, in which address they petitioned him to 'send them arms, and a drill-sergeant' to teach them the military art, so that they might be prepared to join the different volunteer corps that had been formed in the places to which, on their leaving the

Hall, they should return. Previous, however, to their posting their address, they thought it becoming to lay it and the proposal connected with it before the Professor. He approved of the step, but thought it unlikely that Lord Napier would comply with their request. In due time the reply of his Lordship came, in which he thanked them for their loyalty; for the present declined their proffer of help, and stated that he had no arms at his disposal. He, at the same time, wrote the following letter to Dr Lawson:—

'WILTON LODGE, 17*th August* 1803.

'REV. SIR,—At a meeting of the Lieutenancy at Selkirk, yesterday, a report was made to me of the very loyal and zealous exhortation and advice which you had delivered to your congregation on the present very momentous situation of public affairs. As his Majesty's Lieutenant of the county, I feel it to be my duty to return you my best thanks for this well-timed exertion, and to assure you that the Lieutenancy were unanimous in expressing the high sense they entertained of the propriety of your conduct.

'In a separate cover I enclose to you two copies of a printed paper, one of which I should wish to have affixed on the door of your meeting-house, and would request you to communicate the contents of it to your hearers, either by reading the other from your pulpit, or by making it known in such a way as may be agreeable to you.—I have the honour to be, Rev. Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

'NAPIER.'

To this letter the Professor sent the following reply:—

'MY LORD,—I was highly flattered by the letter with which your Lordship honoured me, expressing the Lieutenancy's approbation of my poor endeavours to serve my king and country. I will certainly endeavour to spread the ad-

dress which you was pleased to commit to me. I can assure your Lordship, that whatever distinctions may be found among either denominations of Seceders, they will all be found loyal subjects. Drunkards may have their reasons for calling themselves Christians, and profane swearers for ranking themselves with gentlemen, but no man who does not wish to be a faithful subject can have any temptation to associate himself with either of the societies of Seceders. It is well known, that, upon any discovery of his principles, he would be turned out of either of them with disgrace. I am far from saying that they will be found more loyal than other subjects. Every honest man in the island will contribute his support to the government that protects him. I pray God that the nobility and gentry may be as unanimous in support of our holy religion, as I am persuaded ministers of every denomination will be in the support of the State. I should then entertain little fears of any invader, in the assurance that God Himself would be our salvation in the time of trouble.—I am my Lord, your Lordship's and Gentlemen of the Lieutenancy's humble servant, 'GEORGE LAWSON.'

From the rise of the Secession Church, pitiful efforts have been made every now and then to identify her cause with disloyalty; but these have ever issued in the disgrace of the calumniators. Nothing could have so surely disproved the slander as the life of such a man as Dr Lawson. A purer patriot never lived; and he was the type of his Church. The Rev. John Johnstone tells a beautiful story of his own and his father's friend, illustrative of this. He had gone one session to the Hall a week or two before it commenced, and it happened to be the sacramental season in Selkirk. In these days two sermons were preached on the Monday after a communion. Before dismissing the congregation at the conclusion of this service, the venerable man, leaning on his staff, arose from his seat and ascended the pulpit, and gave

a very judicious and manly address to those in the audience who had enlisted as volunteers, when the country was panic-stricken by the expected invasion of Napoleon I. An unusual number of these patriots belonged to his congregation, and were present to hear this address. Before concluding, he raised his bending figure, and, firmly grasping his staff, he said, 'I am not able, friends, to go out and fight with you, but I will pray for you if you are called upon to engage the enemies of our country.'

About this time, to indicate their high esteem for him as an enlightened patriot as well as a most estimable citizen and Christian minister, the magistrates of Selkirk presented him with the freedom of the burgh. He was much gratified with the 'burgess ticket,' chiefly because it indicated very emphatically that the calumnies that had been cast on him out of the controversy on the 'burgess oath,' had in no way injured him with his fellow-citizens.

The only other comparatively trifling controversies (if they may be so called) in which we find him engaged, had reference, the one to a proposed addition to the psalmody, of which he was an advocate, and the other to a difference with the editor of the *Quarterly Magazine*. His sermon on 'the joy of parents in wise children' had been represented in that periodical as teaching undisguised Arminianism, by ascribing an undue influence to parental culture in particular, and to the means of salvation in general. His reply was very able, and expressed in the clearest manner the misconceptions of his opponent, and the gracious character of the connection which God has established betwixt the means and the end. The controversy was soon terminated. It had been prompted by the spirit of sectarian jealousy and censoriousness, or by the hope of adding to the celebrity and circulation of the magazine.

The only manuscript, in the spirit of a political tractate, which Dr Lawson left behind him, consists simply of a few

cautions bearing on the conduct of certain political partizans who flourished in the stormy days of Muir and Palmer. They are valuable, as showing the calm and scriptural view which he took of the rights of the people, the duties of citizenship, and the nature of true Christian patriotism. The following extract will be read with much interest:—

'That patriotism is a virtue powerfully recommended in Scripture, cannot be doubted. It was gloriously exemplified in the character of many of the holy men of God who lived in ancient times: Esther xiv. 3; Nehemiah, Ezra, David (Psalm cxxii.), Jeremiah (Lamentations). It is prescribed, Psalm vi. It is highly praised, Eccles. ix. 15, 16. If patriotism be a virtue, it must be regulated by Scripture; for the Bible is a complete rule of virtuous and holy practice, by which we are fully furnished for every good work.

'We may rest assured that the Scripture contains proper rules for the direction of our sentiments and practice in the present divided state of the nation, and that if we are at any loss to know the mind of God concerning our duty to our country, the fault must be in our own ignorance and inattention, particularly to our own interests and connections, or to the neglect of prayer. David was often placed in very perplexing circumstances. His Bible was a great deal less than ours, and yet he always found sufficient direction in it concerning that conduct which it was his duty and interest to maintain (Psalm cxix. 24). If he found himself at a loss to understand the prescription of Scripture in any particular case, he applied himself to God by humble and earnest prayer for direction in the way of truth. God heard *his* prayer, and He will hear the prayers of all who acknowledge Him in all their ways (Psalm xxv. 4, 5, 8, 9, 13; Prov. iii. 6, vi.).

'It is our chief end to glorify God. This end ought to be kept in view on every occasion. We ought to eat and drink, and do everything, to the glory of God. Thus shall we be raised far above those mean and selfish dispositions which

split nations into parties, and kindle the flames of dissension and war.

'Piety is the basis of patriotism, and of every virtue. We are to glorify God by doing as little evil and as much good as possible in the world; by acting agreeably to the rules of His holy Word, whether they further our private interests or not; by sacrificing every selfish consideration to the interests of our nation and of the Church of Christ; by walking in love; by living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world; by setting God's judgments before us, and endeavouring to perform those duties which they prescribe, without regarding what the consequences may be to ourselves.

'I shall endeavour to apply a few of the plain and unquestionable rules of the Bible to the present questions that agitate the minds of the people of this kingdom.

'RULE 1. We ought to cultivate friendship with our neighbours who differ from us in political views.

'How good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like precious ointment on the head that went down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirt of his garment.

'We are all brethren, and ought to love as brethren, and to bear with one another's infirmities. Our brethren may err when they differ from us. But we also may err. Do we presume to claim infallibility? Are not those most ready to be mistaken who place the greatest confidence in their own judgment, and are most forward to despise or censure those who cannot see with their own eyes?

'True, you may say, I do not expect that every man will agree with me in all the sentiments I adopt. But some things appear to me so abundantly evident, that I cannot but wonder how any considerate man should be of a different mind; and I cannot help thinking that the men who profess a different opinion are uncandid and disingenuous. Self-

interest is probably warping their judgment, or, what is still worse, their weak principles of conduct dispose them to profess opinions opposite to their own judgment.

'But who gave you a right to judge your neighbours? or what title have you to assume the province of the great Judge who searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men? Consider the effect that different educations, and different turns of mind, and different sets of acquaintance, and different capacities and degrees of attention, and better or worse means of information, have in diversifying men's judgment on the same subject. Beware lest you forfeit the reputation for candour which you deny to others.

'The town-clerk of a certain city in England, reproaching with insincerity a godly minister, arraigned before the court of justice, the good man answered, "How do you know that I do not speak as I think? Are you the searcher of hearts, or are you only the town-clerk?"

'Perhaps you are an enemy to all those meetings which have assembled to deliberate on an application to Parliament for a redress of public grievances. Enjoy your own opinion. Act in pursuance with it. But violate not the charity you owe to your neighbours who differ from you. Accuse them not of seditious principles without proof. You cannot deny that it is the right of subjects to present petitions to any branch of our Legislature, and that petitions for a reform of Parliament have actually been presented without incurring any censure. Why, then, should you charge men with one of the worst of crimes for doing what they have an unquestionable right to do?

'Or, perhaps, you are a friend to the reform of Parliament, and charge those men with slavish principles, unworthy of a Briton, who refuse to join with you. What right have you to do this? Perhaps these men are actuated by principles as pure and honourable as your own. You love peace,

and they are lovers of liberty. You blame those men who say that you are enemies to peace. And do not you deserve blame when you reproach your neighbours as enemies to liberty? The difference between you is, that they dare not risk the peace of the country for the enlargement of its liberty; and you imagine that our peace cannot be secured without a greater degree of liberty than the country at present enjoys. You would not wish any man to arraign your views; but remember that your neighbours have the same right with yourselves to a candid construction of their views, and that charity thinketh no evil. It beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things. Others are bound to practise this charity towards you. Are you not equally bound to practise this charity towards them? Was the law of love made only to protect you from suspicions, calumnies, and outrages? Was it not likewise made to regulate your heart and conduct? Was it not designed to furnish the same protection to other men as to yourselves? If, without sufficient evidence, you charge your neighbour either with sedition or with mean and interested principles of conduct, are you not chargeable with rashness, presumption, and even with falsehood? Go and learn to repeat the 120th Psalm. Tremble at these words, "What shall be given thee? or what shall be done unto thee, false tongue? Burning coals of juniper; sharp arrows of the mighty." Humble thyself, repent, and learn to practise that charity without which no man shall be permitted to enter the regions of love.

'RULE 2. We must be subject to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God, and the powers that be are ordained of Him.

(Illustrations over two pages and a-half.)

'RULE 3. We ought to maintain all civil privileges to the utmost of our power.'

(Illustrations more than three pages.)

'RULE 4. We ought not to be forward in signing tests of

loyalty, especially when the laws of the land do not require it.'

(Illustrations four pages and a half.)

'RULE 5. We ought to concur in every regular and seasonable attempt to improve the advantages, and to obtain redress of the grievances of our country.'

(This is the chief point dwelt upon, the arguments and illustrations extending over eighteen pages.)

CHAPTER IX.

THE FATHER AND HIS AFFLICTIONS.

Few sages shine at the fireside. In the home-circle they are not exactly at home. In the museum, or library, or lecture-room, they 'sparkle and exhale,' but are dim with the mist of thoughts, when withdrawn from the shocks of the outer world, or rendered silent amid unprovoking tameness. It was otherwise with Dr Lawson. He was himself the *popular* man in his own manse. Beloved and venerated as a father, he was not less esteemed as a companion and friend. However prone to profound study, it seemed to have been very easy for him at once to pass into the freedoms of social enjoyment, and to make his children especially the happy partakers of his playful and flexible temperament. The fulness and variety of his information partly account for this. He was never at a loss for an illustration or an anecdote: hence, the young hung upon his lips, as he taught them to know wisdom, and, from almost every field, gathered for them the leaves of the tree of knowledge, the fruits of the sunny climes and the polar snows. He was never repulsive. He was uniformly attractive. The door of his study was never bolted. Entrance was easy, and references to his will and judgment were pleasantly received and considered. His family were as much at home with the 'lion in his den,' as when they surrounded with him the parlour table, and wondered whether the flowings from beneath that yellow wig would ever cease. The fascination was undiminished by frequency or familiarity of intercourse. On each return, their fond and famous father could delight them

with rarer and better new things than ever Athenian listened to. Home was made, in this way, the most attractive spot on earth to them, and to their father they believed there could be no rival. The profound respect which they felt, and the holy love they cherished for him, are thus explained. In reading some of the letters addressed to him by his sons, we are struck with the unaffected reverence that mingles with filial affection, and imparts an air to their intercourse alike courteous and amiable. They seem almost to bow before him as the patriarch of virtue, and of praise the 'chief musician;' and these sons were themselves men of learning and vigour, none of them prone to hero-worship, though great enough to pay tribute to whom tribute is due. He never hid himself at home; but, though uncurtained, his privacy was never desecrated by vulgar stare, or annoyed by impertinent intrusions. They respected him when, over his folios, he sought for wisdom, or transferred his thoughts to the sermon-book. They knew when to use him for their own progress or idlesse, and when, also, to leave him alone; so much so, indeed, that he was sometimes in the habit of studying beside the children, who would vie with each other who should be first to bring to him from the library any book he wished for. Throughout the whole of this great man's way of life, simplicity attends him, and always with her corresponding gifts of success and esteem. Certain familiarities may, but such dignified simplicities as his never, breed contempt. The beautiful language employed to describe a similar feature in the character of Dr Dick may be here quoted, as strikingly true of Dr Lawson: 'There was a simplicity in his manner of thinking, on all subjects, that was very apparent to every one. There was a simplicity and an innocence in his manners in private, of which a stranger, or one who had been seldom in his company, could form no proper conception, but which appeared all the more captivating and delightful the longer and more intimately he was known. His pleasures were all simple

pleasures. They were such as an unsophisticated mind, that loved truth and nature, could relish, and were often drawn from sources which many might think trivial or inadequate to produce these effects: a fine sunset, a lovely landscape, or even a beautiful flower, were to him objects of interest. His love for the works of nature was most remarkable; it was such as we only expect in the young and ardent poet: nor was he ever more elevated and pleased than when he had it in his power to gratify this propensity at leisure. . . . . Simple beauty in sentiment and expression was the quality he seemed most highly to relish in literary productions,—a taste which originated in the same mental structure, and which was shown in the character of his own writings, as well as in his opinions of books, and in the pleasure he took in the great models of classic antiquity.'[1]

To his household, Dr Lawson was both an authority and a pattern. He 'commanded' all under his roof. But it was the law of love, not of terror, that he administered. Such men as he was, are more in danger of ruling than of reigning over their families; and it is rare to find them what are called 'family men.' He never pled his literary tastes or official duties as an excuse for neglecting them. He really felt it to be his main concern to see to their useful and moral education, and never consented to any proxy in discharging it. He superintended their lessons, and marked their progress. He studied to encourage them in diligence, by promising to read aloud to them at night from some interesting book, which he often did, accompanying the reading with such instructing remarks as were suggested by the subject. In this way he read through the whole of Shakespeare to his family, taking care to leave out objectionable passages. He took a peculiar delight in this, and sometimes kept at it so long, and repeated it so often, that his physician recommended its discontinuance. He, however, persevered. The 'Iliad'

[1] Dr William Peddie's Memoir of Dr Dick.

was a great favourite with him, as also 'Anacreon.' He had committed large portions of them to memory in the original Greek; and he used to make the children stare as he repeated these, on the winter nights, for their amusement. When the reading had become irksome, he laid the book down, and encouraged conversation on its topics. He had the most of the speaking, however, to himself; and, being of a most communicative turn, oft the wonder grew where he had got and how he could remember it all. A certain learned lady boasted that she could 'discourse on all things, from predestination down to sewing silk.' She had her counterpart in Dr Lawson. His powers of conversation, also, as has been noticed, seem to have been great, and peculiarly rich. John Foster, it is said, could not *work a conversation.* He seemed to be thinking aloud when he talked. Dr Lawson, however, had a knack at this species of fireside literature, and it was the right or happy kind of knack. A mere haranguer, or talker, has been likened to a 'walking pillory, which crucifies more ears than a dozen standing ones, whose tongue is always in motion, though very seldom to the purpose; like a barber's scissors, which are kept snipping as well when they do not cut as when they do.'[1] But it was not so with this most delightful and amusing, as well as instructive companion. His conversation was colloquy, in the best sense of the word, not lecturing or discussing, and invariably drew out the jocose or the grave from those with whom it was carried on; never compelling silence by its dogmatism, nor inducing to it by its too fascinating or engrossing influence. The fertility of his mind, the cheerfulness of his temper, and his social tastes, gave such quickening and impulse to his prodigious memory, as to make these evenings in the manse for ever to be remembered by all who had the happiness to be present.

He was a strict disciplinarian, but seldom had to 'quarrel'

[1] Butler.

his children. This proves that the 'rod' was seen and feared; also, that they had respect unto it. The surviving members can only remember one instance when it had to be administered; and that was in the case of his well-known son and successor, George, who had absented himself, one night, from family worship,—a breach of family order which he could not, and never did, tolerate. There were two things which he made emphatically imperative within his house: that the truth should be always spoken, and all affectation avoided. The love of truth, as we have seen, was an imperial power in himself:

> 'He would not flatter Neptune for his trident,
> Or Jove for his power to thunder.'

The scene between him and the Lady Traquair was ever turning up substantially throughout his life; and, to the end of it, he could repeat his sublime confession to the Sheriff's wife, that. 'ever since he could use his tongue, he had never polluted it with a wilful lie.' The airs of impudence, too, he looked upon as the 'credentials of impotence,' and denounced all affectation as 'the vain and ridiculous attempt of poverty to appear rich.' The flippant were put to silence, and the presumptuous could not stand in his presence. He regarded, indeed, all sorts of finery as signs of littleness, and, perhaps, allowed this to influence him more than it ought. His own style of dressing was certainly not foppish. Had he been a little more attentive to his wardrobe, he would not have been so much put about as he was, when Sir Walter Scott requested him to appear before Leopold. Meek and lowly, like his Master, he inculcated humility on all that were around him. He had faith in the maxim, that every man has just so much vanity as he lacks understanding; and, accordingly, he cultivated modesty in everything, in his own case, to such an extent, as to be really the only individual who did not know his own greatness. He would have been quite ready, at any time, and in perfect sincerity, to have endorsed, in reference

to his own excellences, the reply of Sir Matthew Hale to Cromwell, who, because the judge would not pack a jury, declared to him that he 'was not fit to be a judge.' 'It is very true,' said Hale, and disconcerted the Lord Protector.

He likewise taught his family to be charitable and kind, and exemplified both before their eyes. His stipend was never large, but every time he got it a portion was laid aside for the poor, especially for the widows of ministers. When the family increased, and when provisions waxed dearer, Mrs Lawson would sometimes remind him that we are commanded to provide for our own first. 'Yes, yes,' he would reply, 'it is all true; but I must lay so much aside for others, that a blessing may come upon what remains.' He experienced it to be 'more blessed to give than to receive.'

He was very conscientious, indeed, in the discharge of all family duties. Family worship has been referred to. His well-known regularity in this respect had its own influence on the good people of Selkirk. The late Dr Beattie, of Glasgow, when warming upon the subject of the Hall life, used to tell, with characteristic satisfaction, that he and other students often walked up and down the principal street of the town, listening to the evening hymn rising from almost every dwelling. Such was the case then in most parts of Scotland; but alas, '*tempora mutantur et nos mutarum in illis.*' Since then, evil days have, in this respect, come upon us, and the morning and the evening sacrifice have been transferred from the altar of the household to the shrine of mammon: hence it is that godliness is displaced by gold, and the true glory of a people is obscured by its glittering sheen.

Frugality in the domestic economy was indeed a necessity in the manse; but it was a virtue also. Whatever his circumstances, Dr Lawson would have lived abstemiously. He abhorred gluttony, wine-bibbing, and every species of extravagance in dress, or furniture, or general habits. He studied simplicity here as elsewhere, having the additional motive of

setting a fair example to his children as well as to his people. He never forgot that he was a minister of the Son of man, who had not where to lay His head; and that his family, as well as his flock, studied him *out* of the pulpit to know what he meant when *in* it. In all these matters he allowed himself to be very much under the influence of a sense which he greatly admired and cultivated—*common sense.* He and Jay, of Bath, were in this like-minded. Jay once exclaimed, 'O when will the grace of God enthrone common sense in the minds of religious professors?' He was, however, quite a social man for all that, and liked a little good company greatly, partaking moderately with them of such of the good things of this life as came in his way. It is true he had not the temptations of Carlyle (the grand demigod of Sir Walter Scott), whose 'warm suppers and excellent claret' are so racily recorded in his autobiography; neither could he have been a match for Dr Magnum Bonum (Dr Webster), 'the five-bottle man.' Carlyle tells us that, in his days, 'a love of claret, *to any degree*, was not reckoned a sin.' It might be so among the jolly fellows with whom he companied; but this was regarded by Dr Lawson and his friends as a crying iniquity, and had something to do in making them still more decided Seceders. It is happy for the Church of Christ that such a state of things has almost passed away, and that the men of the world have no longer the example of the clergy to palliate excess of any kind. At the same time, even that clever, but woefully misled writer, Buckle, might have lived long enough in this manse before discovering a particle of that 'sour and fanatical spirit' which he affirms to pervade Scotland; and Dr Lawson and his family were, in this respect, but types of the yeomanry and peasantry of the land. It were a pity if the most religious country in the world were the most ascetical and unsocial. But it is quite the reverse. Dr Thomson has well said of Dr Lawson (in his funeral sermon): 'If any should infer that his mind was at all darkened

with the gloom of melancholy, or that his seriousness and sincerity towards God led to anything like peevishness or moroseness towards men, their conclusion would be the very reverse of the truth. In him, on the contrary, piety assumed the most amiable and inviting aspect. Serious, yet cheerful, he enlivened every company where he was. However others might be ready to be overawed at the greatness of his mind and the fervour of his piety, yet the childlike simplicity of his manners, the frankness and sometimes the facetiousness of his conversation, together with the perpetual smile which, when with his friends, dwelt on his countenance, contributed to make him a fascinating companion, and caused him fully to exemplify in his practice a principle firmly established in his mind—that personal piety and social pleasantness, as they are quite compatible, should be always united.'

The *Sabbath evenings*, as passed in the household of Lawson, would have been a subject for 'Wilkie' or 'Hogarth.' Having discharged the public duties of the sacred day, and after the frugal evening meal was over, Dr Lawson sat down amid this affectionate and admiring circle, and, Luther-like, drew them into devotion. He had held family worship with them already at morn and afternoon. It was his custom to perform this delightful duty three times on the Sabbath. The third time, however, was somewhat prolonged and diversified. In addition to the usual services, he read aloud out of some good book, catechized on the sermons, and, being very fond of music, sung hymns. As the children clustered around him, he repeated to them, in the most winning and familiar manner, the stories of Joseph, and Samuel, and David, and Jonah; sometimes, diverging from Scripture, he would entertain them with passages from the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' and their appropriate explanations. But he was especially partial to the more sublime and practical portions of the Bible, and would for a long time keep the children hanging upon his lips, through the spirit and pathos with

which he recited the songs of Moses, Deborah, and Barak. His examinations were for the most part drawn from Fisher's Catechism; and such was the estimate formed of the great utility of this department of his Sabbath evening employment, that some of the neighbours solicited and obtained leave to come into the manse while the examinations were going on. The Sabbath *day* of course, but the Sabbath *evening* too, he thus counted 'a delight, the holy of the Lord and honourable.' He used to say, 'I would like to see the Jewish custom universal, of beginning the duties peculiar to the Sabbath at six o'clock on the Saturday evening;' and in his own house he devoted that evening to books or conversation of a serious cast. John Angell James seems to have been similarly impressed: 'The Lord's day he kept with the greatest strictness; and he seemed to consider Saturday evening, if not as a part of it, yet as not to be spent otherwise than as a preparation for it. He was displeased at merriment on that evening, and he never made even a religious enjoyment for it, but spent it in private devotion.'[1] 'So different was his (Lawson's) conduct,' says Dr Belfrage, 'from the common practice of indulging longer in sleep on the Sabbath morning than on others, that he rose earlier, and made his family do so. His domestic instructions and prayers were never hurried over, but discharged as a duty felt to be pleasing as well as solemn. Of Fisher's Catechism he had a high opinion, made his young people read portions of it again and again with great care, and meditate on them: he then examined them as to their conceptions of its meaning, and the impressions it should produce. There was an element in his family instruction which showed his admirable skill, and rendered it most delightful to the young. With his questions and counsels he mingled appropriate anecdotes, exhibiting the pleasures of religion, God's care of His saints, the beauty of early piety, the happiness of the family whose God is the

[1] T. S. James, Esq. See 'James' Life,' p. 581.

Lord, how the fear of God operates as a preservation from sin, what God has done in honour of His own day, and what consolation and hopes the promises of the Gospel have yielded in sickness and death.'

Happy, however, and may we not add, holy, as this family was in the world, they had tribulation: of the many afflictions of the righteous, they had their share. Reflecting on a character like Dr Lawson's, we are tempted to wonder what could be the reasons why God 'contended with him.' In judging here, however, we must not forget, that for great public, as well as for personal and family purposes, God sends the griefs of life to His servants. They are specially qualified for their delicate and difficult duties, by being taken through the ordeal of suffering. Sir James Stephen puts this affectionately, when referring to the death of that accomplished scholar, Alfred Vaughan. In writing to the bereaved father, he says that: 'so frequent disappointment, by a premature death, of such hopes as these, which seems to be a kind of habit in the providential government of the world, is, doubtless, prompted by reasons as just and profound as to us they are obscure. It remains for us all to adore them in silent acquiescence. For those to whom these serious dispensations bring some of the keenest of human sorrows, is reserved a far more arduous duty—the duty of meek resignation, which, I think, is imposed more often on the ministers of the Gospel than on other men, that they may learn by their own bitter experience a lesson which it so often falls to their lot to teach.'[1]

The family of Dr Lawson consisted of three sons and five daughters, of whom, still resident in their father's house at Selkirk, two daughters only survive. Two of the daughters and one of the sons predeceased him. The first death among the 'lambs of his flock' was that of Charlotte, a child, for whom he had evidently cherished unusual love. From the

[1] Letter to Dr Vaughan. See Memoir, p. 113.

'Reflections' on her illness and death, which followed, it is evident that she had been a most amiable child. One that knew the family well, and who had frequent opportunities of witnessing their domestic life, thus speaks of them at this period :—

'A considerable time before Charlotte Lawson was seized with her fatal illness, I called on the Doctor. When ushered into the parlour, I was alike surprised and pleased to find the venerable man having Charlotte on his knee, and singing an ode with a firm and distinct voice: and it was difficult to say which was most delighted, the smiling child or the joyous father. During her illness I frequently called to inquire for her, and sometimes saw him. His face was the very picture of deep and anxious solicitude, mingled with resignation. Several of his people who called, he earnestly asked to pray for the child. Those who knew her intimately, as well as those of the family constantly beside her, he particularly requested to put the question to her, "Do you love Jesus?" And had she only been able to say, "*Yes*," we cannot well conceive what thrilling delight it would have given to his anxious and pious heart. He tells us (in his "Reflections") that it did give him great delight, when told by her elder sister, that, during the night, Charlotte had simply named the name of Jesus. She tried to obtain more words from her, but did not succeed."

When this lovely child died, the bereaved father thus wrote to Dr Husband :—

'SELKIRK, *July* 15, 1799.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—I indulged for some time past the pleasing hope of giving and receiving pleasure by visiting you in Fife. Gladly would I do so now by letter, since I have been debarred from your presence by the providence of God. I will make you sorry by what I have to say; but the sorrows of friendship are not without their mixture of pleasure.

'I went to Peebles two weeks before Lochgelly communion, with a design not to return, although I left my favourite child not quite well. I had the doctor's advice, who was of opinion that I needed not give myself any uneasy apprehension. I found myself, however, not quite satisfied to be so long absent, and returned. I found my daughter so much worse, that I scarcely ever found it possible to exchange words with her; nor could I ever, from the time when I began to apprehend danger, exchange a single sentence with her about her salvation. You will easily judge of my deep distress when I saw her in that state for ten days. The doctors all the time pronounced it unlikely, and for a great part of it, almost impossible, that she could recover.

'Charlotte was a great favourite with us all; her understanding and memory were beyond her years; she showed a great degree of anxiety for religious knowledge, and I had every reason to believe that there was some good thing in her heart towards the Lord God of Israel. I had no apprehensions that she was so near her latter end, so that in her last sickness I might have no opportunities of speaking to her. I had never put such questions to her as might have given me the satisfaction of judging how far the good things I observed and knew to be in her, might be ascribed to her natural disposition; though her love to her Bible, and to hymn-books, and to many other pious books suitable for children, gave me great reason to hope that she possessed the distinguishing qualities of a child of God, as far as could be reasonably expected from one of her tender years. When I found that she was dying, and could never be sure that she could hear or understand anything I said, I had my only refuge in the Hearer of prayer. I reflected bitterly on myself that I had not done more for her soul; and what could I now do for my poor Charlotte? Yet I was persuaded that God would still do for her what might be wanting to prepare her for a better state of being. Many were the petitions that I offered up,

and many were the passages of Scripture from which I endeavoured to extract comfort. It gave me much relief to consider that Jesus, in the days of His flesh, never refused to comply with the solicitations of parents on behalf of their distressed children. I endeavoured to comfort myself with the persuasion that He would hear my prayers on behalf of my dear Charlotte, when I begged for her a share in that eternal life which He came to purchase for the lost.

'I think I have good reason to judge well of her. I am sure I could not have prayed more earnestly for my own salvation than I did for hers. I now wish to indulge the pleasing thought that she is with Christ, and that, if she bestows a thought on me, she pities the condition to which she must know I have been reduced by losing her.

'I find that general consolation is very insufficient for relieving the mind under many particular circumstances of distress: consolations, for instance, under the loss of relations, do not at all apply to my present state of mind. I can lose my relations with the fortitude that becomes a man and a Christian; but our loss is nothing: the question is, *What has become of the dead themselves?*

'I would, indeed, rather have lost anything I possess or hope to possess, friends excepted, than my Charlotte; and yet, from the beginning of her distress to this moment, *the mere loss of her* has appeared to me lighter than nothing: because her eternal happiness was in question, and that she should be cut off for ever from the means of grace and opportunities for spiritual improvement, was the subject of my grief.—Your very affectionate friend,

'George Lawson.'

On the Sabbath after Charlotte's funeral he preached from the text, 'I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.' A friend who heard him says: 'It was a truly eloquent, deeply affecting, and impressive sermon. Some may smile at

the epithet eloquent, as applied to any sermon preached by Dr Lawson; but those who do so must seldom, if ever, have heard him preach; for, so far as I am capable of judging, I have heard more eloquence in several of his sermons than I ever did in any one sermon of any other person. This was the case in the funeral sermon, and still more so in one that he preached some time after on these words, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved." At this distance of time I distinctly remember some of the admirably touching things he said. He very frequently shed tears; but when he attempted to repeat these words, "They —the blessings—shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separated from his brethren," his utterance completely failed him for a while, and tears flowed in abundance. His crowded audience was deeply affected.'

He received at this time the following letter of consolation from his friend Mr Greig:—

Rev. David Greig to Dr Lawson.

'LOCHGELLY, 22*d August* 1799.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—I sincerely condole with you and Mrs Lawson on the death of your amiable young daughter. I find that this event has been very distressing to you; but I hope the Lord has blessed it to you and your family, and enabled you to acquiesce in His holy, wise, and kind disposal. From what you say concerning your departed Charlotte, I think you have all the grounds you could reasonably expect to think that she has entered into the joy of her Lord, and that your grief may well give place to joy and thankfulness. Be grateful to the Giver of every good and perfect gift, that He gave you so lovely a child, and that she gave you so many comfortable evidences that she loved her Creator and Redeemer. I know that the anxieties of parents, who know the importance of religion and eternity, are ready to make them

wish for evidences of the religion of their children more direct and decisive than any can reasonably expect. This, perhaps, in many cases, is their infirmity, and furnishes Satan an handle by which he agitates and disquiets their minds. I hope you will endeavour to guard against indulging unreasonable wishes and groundless suspicions. Sure I am, that were you called to give religious counsel to parents under the loss of such a child as God hath taken from you and Mrs Lawson, you would see reason to bid them be of good cheer, for their daughter was far happier now than ever she was under their charge. And why should you not admit the consolation which you would administer to others? It was the infirmity of Rachel, that she *refused* to be comforted. I hope you are enjoying the consolations which the Scriptures furnish for the afflicted, and that God by His dispensations is qualifying you for still greater usefulness in His Church. You hint that, in the time of your affliction, you had committed some thoughts to writing which you would perhaps communicate to me. I am desirous of perusing them, and if you could send them to me at the time when the Synod meets, I shall be happy. Perhaps you may see it your duty to attend the Synod. It will give pleasure to all your friends to see you on that occasion, and to none more than me.—I am, yours in affection,

'DAVID GREIG.'

It was while suffering underneath this severe rod of his heavenly Father that he composed the only piece in the shape of a diary he ever wrote. This precious production was found among his papers many years after his death, and was published as a tractate, under the title of 'Reflections on the Illness and Death of a Beloved Daughter.' Dr Brown pronounced this work to be a 'precious gem, the most touching picture of sanctified natural affection he had ever seen;' and indulged the hope, if they should be published, of 'seeing the name of Lawson enrolled along with Howe, and Grosvenor,

and Cecil, and Watt, and Boston, among those who comfort the mourners.'

The tears shed for Charlotte were just wiped away when death again entered the fold. On this occasion the stroke fell upon *John*, the twin-brother of Andrew (afterwards of Ecclefechan). He was a youth of bright promise, had passed through the university curriculum with much credit, and was prosecuting his studies in divinity, with a view to the holy ministry, when it pleased God to call him up. His father was specially attached to him, and would cheerfully have kept him at home till his education was finished, but for John's own wish to be engaged as a tutor. He had gone to Penrith to assist Dr Henry Thomson in the academy over which he then presided. The following extracts from the only two letters from his parents that survive will show their feelings towards him :—

'SELKIRK, *January* 4, 1813.

'DEAR JOHN,—All of us, whom you left here, are in good health. We hope that you also are enjoying that blessing, and that you feel the obligations you are under to the God of our lives for bringing us all safe to the beginning of a new year. Whether it is to be the last year of our life we know not; but we know, if we are Christians indeed, that the last will be the best of our years: an hour in heaven is better than a thousand years twice told on earth. The death of your friend and fellow-student, Mr Waugh,[1] will, I hope, remind you of the importance of learning what you learn in religion for yourself in the first place. We hope that you still enjoy life with that relish, without which we cannot be duly thankful to Him who holds our souls in life, and that you are endeavouring every day to sow that seed which will spring up in joy to you during all future years. We all join in affectionate wishes for your happiness both in this world and the next.

[1] Minister of Miles Lane, now Albion Chapel, London.

May God ever bless you with His best blessing.—Your affectionate father, 'G. LAWSON.'

'SELKIRK, *May* 24, 1813.

'MY DEAR JOHN,—Your last arrived in due time, and gave us all a great deal of satisfaction, particularly as it announced your escape from the *militia*. I think the policy was good. It was, however, a favourable providence that you were not called upon at all. When I spoke of a place near home, I only meant to express my hope that such a thing might occur, for, in fact, I know of no such thing. . . . I am sorry to hear that your *picture* is so ill executed. Pray, could the limner not retouch it with advantage? I hope to have the pleasure of seeing it beside Andrew's by-and-bye. I had a letter from him the other day. He is well, but has no particular news. The newspapers mention, lately, the death of Mr Lawrence Glass, minister of Aberdeen. He was a pupil of your father's, fifteen or sixteen years ago. What great reason for thankfulness have we, that God has spared us all so long, and in some measure of comfortable circumstances! May we be enabled to live to His praise, who hath done so great things for us! I observe, dear John, that your confinement is really more than can be agreeable. I hope, when Dr Thomson talks to you on that subject, that you will give him the reason, truly and fully, why you cannot stay with him. Surely he cannot take it amiss, when your health is hurt by confinement. Indeed, I always wished you to inform him of that before this time.—I ever am, my dear John, your loving mother, 'MARGARET LAWSON.'

Though very happy and very useful in Penrith, the insidious disease which a mother's eye had discerned, made such progress as to necessitate his return to Selkirk, just about the time of the meeting of the Hall. He, however, was not able to perform his duties as a theological student at this

session. As autumn leaves were falling, he drooped in strength; and in the last week of December 1813, he fell asleep in Jesus. His death, though looked for, came somewhat suddenly. He was so well on the night before his death, as to be able to raise the tune at domestic worship. At an early hour on the following morning, the family were called up to witness his last struggle, and to hear his last testimony to the preciousness of Jesus, and the hopes of the Gospel. In this conclusion of life, peace and joy characterized the believing of the youthful sufferer. It was customary at that time, to send for the undertaker, at whatever hour of the day or night death took place, who brought along with him what was called the 'dead-board,' upon which the corpse was stretched out. The son of the worthy man who performed this duty at this time, has informed the compiler, that when his father arrived at the manse, he found the family in great distress,—weeping and lamenting over the dead,—Dr Lawson sitting in the midst of them, calm, but overwhelmed. After a short space, he arose and said, 'Oh, Mrs Lawson, will you consider what you are about? Remember who has done this. Be composed; be resigned; and rise, and accompany me down stairs, that we may all join in worshipping our God.' And so they all went down with him to the parlour. He then read out for praise, these solemn verses of the 29th Paraphrase:—

'Amidst the mighty, where is He
Who saith, and it is done?
Each varying scene of changeful life
Is from the Lord alone.

'Why should a living man complain
Beneath the chast'ning rod?
Our sins afflict us; and the cross
Must bring us back to God.'

Before he raised the tune, he paused for a moment, looking

round upon the weeping circle, and then, with faltering accents, said, 'We have lost our singer this morning; but I know that he has begun a song which shall never end,' and then proceeded with the worship: completing a scene as holy and sublime as can well be imagined. It was also customary at that period, and in that quarter, when the day of funeral came, for the chief mourners to come out and stand at the door, in front of the house, to receive the company as they assembled. Dr Lawson, however, was not there; and, as the hour was past, the undertaker (one of his elders) entered the manse to inquire the reason. No one could inform him. Upon which, he opened the door of the library, and found the afflicted father on his knees in prayer.

A few days after this, a letter came to '*John*,' from one of his pupils at Penrith—son of Herbert Buchanan, Esq. of Arden—making anxious inquiries as to his health. The letter was opened and read by the father, who wrote an answer to it, as if from John himself in heaven,—'an answer which breathes not the language of terror and despair, like the spirit that assumed the figure, the voice, and the mouth of the departed prophet, but that of holy love and hope, like the words of Moses and Elias, when they appeared in glory on the Mount, and spake of the decease which Jesus should accomplish at Jerusalem:'[1]—

'Dear Sir,—Your hope that I am in a better state of health than formerly, is now more than realized. God has, in His infinite mercy, been pleased to receive me into those happy abodes where there is no more sorrow, nor death, nor sin. I now hear and see things which it is impossible to utter; and would not give one hour of the felicity which I now enjoy, for a lifetime, or for a thousand years, of the greatest felicity which I enjoyed on earth.

'I still love you and the other friends whom I left on earth,

[1] Dr H. Belfrage.

but my affection for them is very different from what it was: I value them not for the love which they bear to me, or the amiable qualities which are most generally esteemed by men, unless they love my Lord and Saviour, through whose blood I have found admission to heaven. The happiness that I wish for you, is not advancement in the world, or a rich enjoyment of its pleasures; but the light of God's countenance, the grace of His Spirit, and a share, when a few years have passed, of those things which eye has not seen nor ear heard, and which it has not entered into the heart of man to conceive.

'It is not permitted to us who dwell on high to appear to our former friends, and to inform them of our present feelings; and, ardently as I desire to have you a participant of my felicity, I do not wish to approach you in a visible form, to tell you of the riches of the glory of that inheritance which I possess. Abraham tells me, that the writings of the prophets and apostles are better fitted to awaken sinners to a sense of everlasting things, and to excite good men to holiness, than apparitions and admonitions of their departed friends would be; and what he says is felt to be true by all of us. I do not now read the Bible. I thank God I often read it from beginning to end, when it was necessary for me to learn from it the knowledge of my beloved Saviour; and yet, if I could now feel uneasiness, I would regret that I made it so little the subject of my meditation. You would be glad to know whether, though unseen, I may not be often present with you, rejoicing in your prosperity, and still more in every good work performed by you, in every expression of love to my God, and care for the welfare of your own soul. But I am permitted to tell you no more on this subject than God has thought meet to tell you in His Word, that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth; that angels are present in Christian assemblies, observing with pleasure or indignation the good or bad behaviour of the worshippers;

and that we welcome with great joy our friends from earth, when they are received into our everlasting habitations.

'Farewell, my dear friend, farewell, but not for ever. What are all the days you have before you on earth, but a moment! I hope that the grace which hath brought me so early in my existence to heaven, will bring you all to the same happy place, after sparing you some time longer in the lower world to serve your generation, by His will, and to do more than I had an opportunity to do, for exciting your neighbour to choose the path of life. Much good may be done by the attractive example, by the prayers, and (at proper times) by the religious converse of Christians engaged in this world.

'Farewell again, till we meet never to be separated.—I am, your friend, more sincerely than ever, 'JOHN LAWSON.'

The feelings of Dr Lawson at this time will best appear in the following exquisitely beautiful letters, addressed to friends:

Dr Lawson to Herbert Buchanan, Esq.

'SELKIRK, *Jan.* 2, 1814.

'SIR,—This comes from the afflicted father of John Lawson, to announce to you his departure from this valley of tears on Wednesday, last week, at four o'clock in the morning. Having found some letters from you among his papers, in which you express a warm regard for him, gratitude induced me to make this communication to you, which will give you pain for the present, but I hope may do you good in the latter end. I think I have reason to believe that he has left our society for that of holy angels. I bless God for the good hope I have of one day rejoining him in happier circumstances than ever; yet I confess I have sometimes felt some degree of regret that he has not been longer spared in this world, to do something in the exercise of that profession which he had in view for the direction of his fellow-men into the way of salvation; but to solace my sorrow, it occurs to

me, that, for aught I know, his example or his conversation may have already contributed in some degree to that end. And that the remembrance of his early death may not be without its happy effect upon those who honoured him with their friendship, and who cherish his memory, it occurs to me that those who loved him will entertain the favourable opinion that he is now in heaven, and that they will wish to be again partakers of his society. Thus they may have a new excitement to consider, and to walk in the good way, by which they may at last have the happiness of again enjoying that society which was in former times a part of their happiness. This is a consideration which is not without its effect on myself. I have lost several dear friends, with whom I parted in the hope of dwelling with them for ever; I would shudder at the thought of being, by the sentence of our great Judge, for ever excluded from their fellowship, and of becoming the object of their contempt.

'I learn from Scripture that there is joy in heaven over sinners that repent, and also, though in a less degree, over righteous persons that need no change in their course of life. That joy, I am persuaded, has place among departed Christians as well as among angels; and if my sentiments on this subject are right, we see how we may give pleasure to our departed friends. My dear son delighted to give pleasure, and was grateful to all who endeavoured to give him pleasure when he was upon earth; and I doubt not that it will be an augmentation to his pleasure in the eternal world, to know that any of those whom he loved on earth are following him in the path which he trode to that world where he now is. He has left all his relations in grief, but I hope their grief will have happy effects upon them; and when his life has not been so useful as we could have wished it, it will add to his happiness if his death be useful, especially to those whom he loved on earth.

'I conclude with sincere thanks for the friendship you

appear to have entertained for him, and remain, your humble servant, 'G. LAWSON.'

Dr Lawson to Dr Husband.

'SELKIRK, 30*th December* 1813.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—What is the reason that I have been so long of hearing from you, except in short letters of business? I hope you have not blotted me out of the list of your friends. It would be too much for me to meet with such a calamity at this time. I have lost, on Wednesday morning, one of my dearest and most affectionate, and I hope I may say one of my best friends, in a son, whom God was pleased to take (I humbly hope) to Himself. Never did a son love his father or his mother with a warmer affection. Never did mother or father love a son more warmly since the first period of Christianity.

'The last time I wrote to you was, I think, on the occasion of a similar calamity. It is probable that I then would not enter very deeply into your feelings, although I had in former times met with similar afflictions. I wish I may not at present renew your sorrows by entering too deeply into them.

'My heart is sore pained within me in my solitary musings. Were I now to become rich, the acquisition would scarcely give me pleasure, because my beloved John is to inherit no part of my substance. When I amuse myself with writing discourses, it will often occur to me that John is to have no part of them when I leave the world. He took great pleasure, from his early years, in hearing or in making plans of sermons; and within these few days he spent a few minutes of each day in writing a portion of a sermon from a text which I had prescribed him.

'His ruling disposition seemed to be, to please and to be pleased. I know not that he was ever angry with any person, or that any person was ever angry with him. And I had good reason to think that he was a real fearer of God, who made use of what he learned in religion for his own benefit.

'Perhaps I have used too strong language in speaking of my affliction. My heart is pained sore within me at the recollections concerning him that frequently present themselves to my mind; yet I hope I am not altogether unthankful for much mercy in his last sickness and his death. I little doubt of his readiness for his departure. His sufferings were so moderate till the last day of his life, or his patience so well disguised them, we could not be persuaded to resign some hope of his recovery. If he had lived much longer, we have reason to believe that his pains from want of breath would have been so extreme as to rend our hearts. But he died suddenly, after six months' sickness. On the morning of last Wednesday he was suddenly torn from us, and, I humbly hope, conveyed by angels into the bosom of his Saviour.

'My beloved John is torn from me during the few years that remain for me on earth, but the separation between him and me will not be nearly so long, as if he had been appointed to live as long as I have already done in this valley of tears. I trust ere long to see him again with joy, and yet I wish and I ought to say, Whom have I in heaven but Thee?

'You and I ought both to bless God that we have yet several children alive, who love us as affectionately, and whose departure from us we would have as bitterly regretted, as those of them whom we have lost.

'It will be still happier if we can indulge the hope (and I am much disposed to do it), that the remaining part of our families will at the great day have a joyful meeting with those who have gone before them. What precious consolations are in Christ and His Gospel! It gives us the hope of eternal life to ourselves, and teaches us how to direct the path of our children towards the better country, where there are no painful separations.

'You will not forget to communicate to your family and your colleague my earnest wishes that they may all be found walking in the way of peace. Then will you have much

pleasure in their life, and their death (if they should die in youth) will not be without pleasure to counterbalance its sorrows to surviving friends.

'Remember me to Alexander. I believe I cannot at this time write to Mr Greig. I believe that you and he were praying for me if you heard of the distress of my family, and I still need your prayers.

'May the God of hope fill us and all our friends and brethren with peace and joy in believing.—I am, your well-wisher, 'GEORGE LAWSON.'

To this letter Dr Husband sent the following very touching response:—

Dr Husband to Dr Lawson.

'DUNFERMLINE, *June* 3, 1814.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am most deservedly, and yet affectionately, reproved for not replying to your sympathizing letters which I received during my afflictions. I reckon it an evidence of unabated and warm friendship, that you regard me as one to whom you can pour out your sorrows with the assurance of sympathy. From the first moment that you did me the honour to rank me among your friends, I have fondly cherished the idea, and do still cherish it, as one of my greatest earthly blessings. How pleasing to think that friendships formed on earth shall not be finally dissolved by the separating stroke of death, but be renewed with unspeakable advantage in a happier and better world! I wonder that it should ever have been a question whether friends will know one another in the heavenly state. The supposition that they will not, is contrary to the scriptural representations of heaven, which hold it out as a state of happy society. It is contrary to the constitution of human nature, as framed by the wisdom of God,—a constitution which makes us cleave to others, and renders intercourse with them a spring of some

of our highest pleasures. It is not piety, but ignorance, to say that the blessed God will so occupy the minds of those who dwell in His presence, that they will have neither leisure nor inclination to attend to any other object, for they will enjoy God in all, and all in God.

'I have perused your letter again and again, and I cannot peruse it without mingling my tears with those of the afflicted parents who have suffered so great a bereavement. But you have not lost your dear son. He is only gone a little before, to wait and hail your arrival on the shores of bliss. His character was, indeed, most engaging. I know it not merely by the testimony of a fond afflicted father; I know it by the testimony of those who may be supposed to have looked on him with a less partial eye.

'To say that I sympathize with you, would be to tell you nothing but what you firmly believe. But I cannot say I *pity* you. You are greatly afflicted, but you are not miserable. You believe that your son is inconceivably happier than he would have been with you and his affectionate mother; and you have the well-grounded hope of seeing him ere it be long, and of uniting with him in tracing the several steps of wisdom and goodness by which you were led to the blessed region which you are to inhabit.

'Your dear John now knows unspeakably more of his Bible than he could have reached on earth by the most diligent study, with all the assistance his father could have given him, or than ever the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation Himself is pleased to impart while we dwell in this world of error and mistakes. Happy state! when that which is perfect is come, and that which is in part is done away.

'I find my heart refreshed while it is melted by your letter. It is so much the language of genuine grief, and at the same time of true consolation, that, while it teaches me here to mourn, it directs me where to find consolation.—I am, yours sincerely, 'JAMES HUSBAND.'

Dr Lawson to Rev. A. Lothian.

'SELKIRK, 1*st January* 1814.

'MY DEAR SIR,—I write this to inform you of an event which I know will give you much regret. It is the death of my beloved son John, to whom, as to his brother, you paid so much attention when he resided in Edinburgh. I take a kind of melancholy pleasure in expressing my gratitude to those who favoured him with their regard. Yet I find them so numerous when I think of them, that I cannot find terms of acknowledgment for them all. He had partly from nature, and I hope also in part from grace, a facility in making friends who will now sympathize with us in our sorrow. I believe he never made any enemies, nor do I know that he ever met with unkindness.

'His death makes a large diminution to the earthly happiness of us all. We cannot but mourn for the loss of one whom we loved so dearly, and who so well deserved our love. This last observation I would not so readily make to you, if I were not persuaded, from your knowledge of him, that you will not place it to the account of a father's partiality. I am sure, from continued experience, that a great part of his happiness lay in giving pleasure to his parents, to his brothers and sisters, to our friends and his, and to all who had any connection with him.

'I believe we have reason to ascribe it to partial fondness in David, that he never said to Adonijah, "Why hast thou done so?" But Adonijah was born to be a prince, and exposed to those dangerous temptations which attend high stations in life. My dear son was born in a humble and safer station. And I do not feel regret, but pleasure, in the recollection that I never, so far as I remember, found fault with him. On the contrary, I sometimes told him that I had been always well pleased with his behaviour.

'I do not know that he was ever called to the great duty

of Christian forgiveness; but no doubt, if his life had not been short, he must have been exposed in some degree to the injuries that try the meekness of the Christian. His days have been very few in this world, but I trust that "God has given him length of days for ever and ever."

'We all mourn deeply for the want of him; but we are all persuaded that we have great reason to rejoice and be thankful for the ground we have to think that he is incomparably happier than we can hope to be, till we are with him. Our grief will, I hope, have its influence in preparing us for that felicity. All of us should shudder at the thought of being for ever separated from him. This, indeed, is a consideration that ought to have infinitely less influence upon our minds than the desire of being with Christ; yet I think it may be allowed a place in our thoughts. The holy writers do not always use the most powerful arguments in recommending holiness, and the weaker may sometimes be of great use when the stronger are not felt as they ought to be.'

In little more than three years after this, Dr Lawson drank of another cup filled with a similar sorrow. His youngest daughter, Jane, who had just grown into lovely womanhood, exhibited symptoms of that fatal disease which had laid her brother in an early grave. One of her brothers (George) had recently been settled in Bolton, and it was resolved to send her south, that, under his kind roof and with change of air, she might derive bodily recruiting. On her way thither, she had gone round by Edinburgh and Glasgow, accompanied by one of her sisters. They carried the following letter to his ancient friend, Mr Swanston:—

Dr Lawson to John Swanston, Esq.

'SELKIRK, *June* 1816.

'DEAR FRIEND,—I rejoice your anxiety on your daughter's account terminated in the joy of an addition to your

family; and yet this joy must, of course, introduce new solicitudes.

'Such is the nature of earthly comforts. But it is well ordered that we should not find our rest in sublunary things. And when our hope is in the Lord, we can with safety commit to Him everything that is dear to our hearts on earth. His blessing is promised to the houses as well as to the persons of them that trust in Him.

'I believe this will come to you by the hands of two of my daughters, one of whom has been strongly urged by her physician to make a voyage to her brother in Lancashire. I have been very anxious for her for some time past, although she does not appear to be worse than she was some time ago. I should be glad you could have Dr Nimmo's opinion, whether the voyage is likely to be useful to her. It would be a great diminution of what remains of my earthly comfort if she could not recover. She has been always a very dear child, and deservedly so. But what shall I say? Much better men than I have often been bereaved of their beloved children, and had no reason to complain of Him, who took only what He had given. I think I have reason to hope that God will either recover my beloved daughter to me, or take her to Himself.

'Although you have not wept for the death of children, I believe your feelings have not been less acute for several very amiable friends, than those of parents who lamented over their sons or their daughters. But it is much more comfortable to weep for the loss of amiable friends than for the bad life of friends of an opposite description. Whilst we mourn for our own loss, we rejoice in the happiness of those who are taken out of a world of vanities and sorrows, to the regions into which sin or sorrow never enters.

'Nothing can fully satisfy our minds when we think of our long lost friends, but the hope of rejoining them. We are not worthy to be admitted into their society. But they,

once, like us, lamented their own unworthiness; and they washed their robes, and made them white in that fountain of blood which stands open to us also.

'I doubt not that I shall have Mrs Swanston's prayers along with yours, for mercy to my poor distressed child. May you and she be ever preserved from the pangs of bereavement of children. But what do I say? We must be parted one way or other from our dearest friends in a not very distant period. I sympathize with Dr Nimmo in his late bereavement. His feelings must be painful, although he is not the chief mourner. But I am well informed that his amiable sister had hope in her death.—I am, yours ever,

'G. LAWSON.'

The sisters, by easy stages, arrived in safety at Bolton, and received the following reply to their 'arrival letter' from their anxious parent:—

Dr Lawson to his Daughter Jane.

'SELKIRK, *June* 29, 1816.

'MY DEAR JEANIE,—We received Nancy's letter last night. The doctor was present, and he thought it a favourable symptom that you did not appear to be worse, after so many removals from place to place. We will wait with anxiety for a letter from Bolton. God grant that it may bring us good accounts of your state of health. Many of your friends inquire for you. I love them the better for it. I do not think that you will be put to great trouble by the hard duty of forgiving your enemies: you have many warm friends; but I have not yet heard of any of your enemies. We are all much indebted to your sister for her care of you. She could not perform to us more acceptable service. The natural kindness of brothers and sisters is well-pleasing to the God of love; and the acts of kindness which are attended with some trouble and inconvenience to ourselves, are the

best proofs of the sincerity of that affection from which they proceed. You are, I hope, well established in the belief, that as high as the heavens are above the earth, the compassion of your heavenly Father exceeds the tender affection of your earthly parents; yet a question will arise in your mind, Why does not God send His word and heal you? My father on earth would give everything he had for the recovery of my health; but God needs only speak the word, and His handmaid will be whole: yet His hand is stretched out still to afflict me. You will of yourself be able to silence such whisperings in your bosom: you never did anything displeasing to me, but everything the reverse; you were always happy in my presence, and disposed to render me happy; but we have all sinned a thousand and a thousand times against the Holy One of Israel, who looks upon all sin with abhorrence. No wonder that He often makes us feel the effects of His displeasure. If His mercy were not as much above the compassion of an earthly father as the heavens are above the earth, the condition of all of us would be most dreadful; but you will likewise consider, that God's wisdom is equal to His mercy: He knows infinitely better than we what is good for us. What we would rejoice to see is your face, as usual, clothed in pleasant smiles; but God knows the heart, and His pleasure lies in that holiness which has its chief place in the inner man. For this reason He sends and continues trouble, that you may be a partaker of His holiness. His eye glances through all the days of your life, and of eternity; and He considers that best for you which will be found best at the distance of many years of life, or of ages in a better world. I persuade myself that you have gained more in that which is the true beauty of a Christian, than you have lost in looks, which will be still pleasant to us after all the change which sickness has made upon you; but our hope is, in a few weeks to see your countenance renovated with health, whilst the happy effects of your affliction continue unim-

paired. We are much indebted to the friends whom you have seen, for their kindness to your sister and yourself.

'You are going to friends who will not be less kind; and never did they perform a service more grateful to us, than their attention to you in your present state.

'I always loved you dearly, but now much more than ever. I am pleased with the placidity with which you bear your distress. May God give you to bear with all patience what He is pleased to lay upon you; and to be thankful for every symptom of begun recovery, if He accomplish our humble hopes of your deliverance. Remember the Lord, and what He suffered for our salvation. Have we any reason to complain of our sickness, when Jesus Himself, the Lord of glory, was pleased to bear our sicknesses, and carry our sorrows, that by His stripes we might be healed?

'Your mother and sister remember you with warm affection: they would think it one happy symptom if you could write a few lines to us with your own hand, which we sincerely trust may soon be the case. God grant that a favourable answer may be vouchsafed to our earnest supplications for your speedy restoration to health; and, above all, that He may at least bestow upon us in a better world length of days, for ever and ever.—Your affectionate father,

'G. LAWSON.'

The hopes entertained from this change were doomed to disappointment. 'My heart is grieved,' he writes to his son, 'because you have not been able to give a more favourable account of my beloved daughter's health; but I have better reason, if possible, than Eli to say, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good." In the threatened destruction of his two wicked sons, he trembled at the thought of their awful condition under the wrath of God. I have reason to hope that our dear Jane is suffering under the hand of a gracious Father, to make her a partaker of His holiness, and

to prepare her for eternal happiness. It must give you great pain to witness the sufferings of a sister so justly dear to you; but it will give you pleasure, many days hence, to remember that you had the opportunity, and did not suffer it to pass unimproved, of consoling her mind, and suggesting useful directions to her. May God bless all your endeavours to tranquillize her, and to prepare her for the event.'

At length this amiable young woman died at Bolton, in her brother's house. But we must allow paternal grief to tell its own story:—

Dr Lawson to Rev. A. Lothian.

'SELKIRK, 10*th August* 1816.

'MY DEAR SIR,—I have not yet sent you my thanks for the kind attention which you paid to my beloved daughter Jeanie, when she passed through Edinburgh. Your fears for her were too well grounded: it pleased God to remove her out of this world on Wednesday last. She has carried away a very large portion of my earthly felicity; but I hope my loss is not to be compared with her gain. This is the opinion of my son likewise, who says, in his letters to me, that he entertains no doubt of her sleeping in Jesus. I will say to you, what I would not say to others promiscuously, that she was lovely and pleasant in her life. Her pains seem never to have been extreme. No murmur ever passed from her lips, and she gave no expression of dissatisfaction, either with her distress of body or her distance from home.

'I have sometimes been afraid of intruding into the things which I have not seen, by forming a judgment of my departed children or friends; but a well-known text satisfies my judgment, that there is no irreverence to God in taking the comfort of strong persuasion, that our departed friends are happy, when their lives have given us all the grounds for it that can ordinarily be expected. We are commanded not to mourn for those who are fallen asleep in Jesus, like those who have

no hope. We cannot improve this consolatory direction without the persuasion that our friends are sleeping in Jesus, and shall rise with Him.

'God has chastised me sore, by removing from my eyes several children that were very dear to my heart. But it would be impious and ungrateful to murmur or to call in question the goodness of Him who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for our salvation. Job blessed God when He made desolate all his company. Have not you and I reason to bless Him, who spares so many children to us, and so many other rich comforts?

'I am afraid I have given too large a proportion of my heart to my dear children. May God determine our hearts to love Himself above our dearest earthly comforts.

'I will be obliged to you to take the trouble of notifying her decease in the public news. I give you, on the top of the following page, the words in which I think it will be proper to announce it. I wish the intelligence to reach Fife as soon as convenient, because I have some friends there who would be praying for her recovery—that they may turn their supplications for my family into a new form.

'My wife, and all of my family who are present, desire me to present their affectionate compliments to Mrs Lothian and your family, along with yourself. We need your prayers.—I remain, yours affectionately, 'G. LAWSON.'

Dr Lawson to Dr Husband.

'SELKIRK, 31*st August* 1816.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—I received your welcome letter by Mr Murray. We have many alleviations of our grief; and the sympathy of friends, and especially of such friends as you, is far from being the least of them. We must mourn whilst we are in this world for our own calamities, and those of our friends. It is wisely ordained that we should be under the necessity of feeling what we are so unwilling to believe, that

our happiness is not to be expected from the most delightful enjoyments of this world. What would all the kingdoms and glory of this world avail me? They could not restore those pleasant children whom I have lost (not, I hope, for ever). The possession of them, I believe, would bring me more sorrow than joy, because those whom I loved so dearly cannot enjoy them with me.

'It gave me pleasure that, when you have so just cause to mourn bitterly, you mourn after a godly sort, and are enabled to comfort others with the comforts wherewith yourself also are comforted of God. What would have become of you or me if our mourning had been like David's for two of his sons? Would we not have been crushed under the dreadful weight? Blessed be God that we mourn not like them that have no hope. There is hope of our children in their latter end, that they shall be brought again from the land of the enemy. The last enemy is already conquered. Our dear deceased children have (we humbly hope) obtained the victory over him through the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony.

'The Lord will swallow up death in victory, and will wipe away tears from all faces,—tears already wiped away from the faces of those for whom we mourn; and if we look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, we believe that they shall be wiped from our faces also.

'It is now more than forty years since I enjoyed the rich pleasures of your friendship. Within less than the half of that time, it is probable we shall be in a world where things will be viewed in a different light from what they now are. May we not, then, be praising God for His goodness in chastising us by the loss of our pleasant children, that we might be partakers of His holiness? Whilst I live, if I should live as many years as I have already lived, I will remember those lovely children whom God gave me and took from me. But my remembrance will not be unmingled with pleasure.

'My poor Jeanie had a happy life, for she was always

cheerful, and always wished to make others happy. Her last illness was not, in appearance, extremely painful. As far as I have been informed, she was never heard to complain. She now sleeps in the dust, at a great distance from me, but not, I hope, from her Redeemer. She sleeps in Jesus, and God will bring her with Him.

'I told Dr Anderson how very sorry you were at not seeing him. He was much delighted with Mr Macfarlane's company in some place where he saw him.—I am, ever affectionately yours, 'GEORGE LAWSON.'

No pious mind can rise from the perusal of these almost apostolic letters, without being convinced that the author held close communion with 'the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.' We hear in them all one and the same voice of meek resignation and heavenly hope. He was wont to tell his people that they should strive to *rejoice* in their tribulations, and finished the admonition once with these beautiful words: 'The blackbird sings sweetly with the thorn at her breast, and so should God's children when passing through their trials.'

In the lives and conversations of his two surviving sons, Dr Lawson had increasing delight during the remaining days of his life. The eldest, GEORGE, became one of the most popular preachers in our Church. He was first of all ordained in Galashiels, 4th November 1806; then he removed to Bolton; from that he was translated to Kilmarnock; and finally, after the deaths of his father and brother Andrew (who succeeded his father in Selkirk), he too became one of his father's successors, and died 15th December 1850. In writing to him at Kilmarnock, Dr Lawson says, 'Our chief pleasure as ministers should be in doing good, and in the conscientious use of the means of doing good. It can give little pleasure to any man of consideration to be valued more than he deserves; and it need not give us great pain to be despised,

or to incur the displeasure of men, if we are conscious of endeavouring to perform the duties we owe to them. I have no hope of ever seeing you or your brother at Kilmarnock. I have had my time in which I was happy to visit distant friends, but everything in this world has its end. Let your brethren know that I am glad to hear of their prosperity, and of their endeavours to perform faithful service to Christ and to their people. I am sorry that I have not been able to do more than I have done to prepare them for usefulness: but to supply my defects I hope they will be daily learners at the school of Paul, or rather of Christ, and that they will treasure up in their minds the epistles to Timothy and Titus, which are epistles from Christ to all ministers who are called to labour in His service.'

Dr Nicol, of Jedburgh, preached the funeral sermon of a worthy father's worthy son, from which we make but one extract: 'Mr Lawson was indebted in an eminent degree, for the rich furnishing of his mind and the early formation of his character for the work of the ministry, to the example and training of his father, Professor Lawson, a man singularly endowed by nature with a large and apprehensive mind, and by a careful education, added to a large measure of the grace of God, with all that variety of learning and Christian experience which rendered him such an accomplished teacher of Christianity whether in this pulpit or among his people, in the chair of theology or in the bosom of his family. Our departed friend was in the habit of acknowledging his obligations to the careful training of this learned and godly man; and in all the varied scenes of his ministry, down to the very close of it, his wonderful maturity as a minister of the Gospel gave evidence, that whilst it was the grace of God that had enlightened his mind and accomplished him for the work of the Gospel, he had profited very early and very much by the singular advantage of his parentage: his mind, naturally rich and strong, having been disciplined judiciously under paternal

care, so as to store his memory, at a very early period of life, with the word of truth, and a vast variety of useful knowledge subordinate to it; form him into the habit of a quick and sound judgment on all subjects; and teach him to consecrate and employ his faculties under a lively sense of responsibility to God.'

Andrew Lawson, the twin-brother of Charlotte, was his father's immediate successor in Selkirk. On the death of Dr Lawson, the church gave the call, in the first instance, once and again to George, the elder of the two; but he firmly declined. On one or other of them, however, the people's hearts were set; and Andrew was, after a second call, prevailed upon to leave his charge at Ecclefechan and become their pastor. The death of Charlotte, his closest and dearest companion in childhood, had made a deep impression on his mind. He determined to study for the ministry, and, along with his younger brother John, with that view he attended the University of Edinburgh, and afterwards joined the Hall under his father's presidency. It was during their third session at the latter that John died. At that time Dr Lawson said, 'I am very sorry for Andrew, more so indeed than for any of the rest of the family; for this is the second time he has been deprived of his companion: first Charlotte, and then John, having been withdrawn from him.' He was much loved in and around Selkirk, for his own and for his father's sake. He was ordained at Ecclefechan, 2d October 1816; inducted to Selkirk, 1st June 1824; and died there on the 28th October 1836, in the twenty-first year of his ministry and forty-fifth year of his age. After his death, his brother George consented to leave Kilmarnock for Selkirk. 'His character,' says one who knew him well, 'was not showy and artificial, but solid and sincere. When George Whitfield was asked respecting the character of a certain person, he replied, "I can't tell, I never lived with him." This test may be applied with advantage to the deceased. Intimacy and

esteem grow together. It was in the domestic circle that the amiableness of his heart appeared. In the bosom of his family, and amid the endearments of home, he spent many of his sweetest and happiest hours. There he was blessed with all that affection could desire, and enjoyed the soft and tender pleasures which flow from the purest friendship. . . . His mental faculties were well balanced. This gave harmony to his mind and consistency to his conduct. As there was no one power more prominent than another, there was no eccentricity about him. His perception was clear, his judgment sound, his memory capacious and retentive, and his imagination lively, though neither bold nor discursive. Accuracy and neatness were things in which he delighted. . . . He had a taste for the curious and rare, whether in nature, science, or literature. For the witty and the humorous he had a keen relish, and occasionally showed that he had no mean power for them himself. His acquaintance with general literature was considerable, and his knowledge of the learned languages, especially of Latin and Hebrew, was minute. . . . It is not too much to say, that he enjoyed to a large extent the esteem and confidence of his fellow-citizens, and descended to the grave amid the noonday splendour of an untarnished reputation. A gentleman advanced in life, and of extensive acquaintance with society, said on the day of his funeral, "He was the most perfect character I ever knew, except his father. He did more good, perhaps, with less ill, than any other man of my acquaintance."'

It may interest the reader to be told that the present occupant of the pulpit at Selkirk is a son of this most excellent man, in every respect worthy to represent his uncle, his father, his grandfather, and his great-grandfather, who went before him in the Christian pastorate of that church.

The only relic of Dr Lawson's correspondence with this son is subjoined:—

Dr Lawson to his Son Andrew.

'SELKIRK, *July* 1814.

'MY DEAR A.,—We received your letter, and were glad to find that you had reached Stirling in safety, where nothing will be wanting on the part of our friends to make your visit agreeable. We are now, in a great measure, debarred by age and infirmities from enjoying such pleasures as we once did; but we enjoy them a second time, when our children taste the pleasures that belong to their time of life, without forgetting that the pleasures of a good conscience are a necessary ingredient in all the pleasures of life.

'You are now in a pleasant district of the country, and in a district which calls up many recollections interesting to every native of Scotland. I hope you will not leave Stirlingshire, without looking with attention at the place where Wallace and Bruce fought hard battles for the freedom of their country, where the rebellion of 1715 was quelled, and where many other transactions which will never be forgotten by them who have read the history of their country, took place. The Grahams, Wallace, Bruce, Argyle, and all the heroes of the days of old, are gone to the land of forgetfulness; but their exploits will ever be remembered. Yet they will themselves remember with pleasure only their works which were wrought in God; and although we do not expect that any of our works will be remembered long after we leave this world, by our fellow-men, yet every work of faith and labour of love will be remembered for ever by God. At the great day, the little charities, the kind services to persons in distress, the prayers, the edifying speeches of many poor women, unknown beyond their own parishes, will make a greater figure than all the exploits of Alexander, or even of the heroes who were the ornament and defence of their country, unless their glories were sanctified by a sincere regard to God, and to our Saviour Jesus Christ.

'My hearing is a little improved, so I hope I shall still be able to continue my charge of the students; but I will wait patiently to see what God will do for me; and should it be His will that I should resign that charge, I will be thankful that I have been so long entrusted with the care of them.—Yours affectionately, 'G. LAWSON.'

Thus nurtured in the ordeal of affliction, Dr Lawson was a comforter of others—indeed, a son of consolation:

'Haud ignarus mali, miseris succurere disco.'

We have already given specimens of his sympathy with his fellow-sufferers, and now wind up this chapter with a few more, in every way worthy of his fame, and well suited to heal the broken in heart:—

Dr Lawson to a Mother on the Death of her Son.

'SELKIRK, *Sept.* 1812.

'MADAM,—Although I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance, I take this opportunity of expressing my sympathy with you and your afflicted partner, for the loss of your amiable son, whose talents and piety promised (if his life had been spared) much comfort to you, and much advantage to the Church. I am glad to hear he was blessed, on his death-bed, with the cheering hope of being with Christ. I am persuaded that his hope was well grounded. You must be of the same opinion; and, therefore, I hope that your joy and peace will exceed your grief. You will, while you live, mourn the loss of such a son; but you will bless God you had such a son to lose. Would you not rather be the mother of the deceased youth, than of most surviving children? How many fathers and mothers would be glad that their children were such as yours, although they were to lose them next day! I remember it is related of Elliot, the American Apostle, that he had some sons in youth, whom he wished to educate for the ministry; but he cheerfully acquiesced in the

will of God. He designed them, he said, for the service of Christ in His Church on earth; but, as it was His will they should serve Him in a better world, he was not so unreasonable as to make any objections. Time, I hope, has softened your sorrows, and it is right it should; yet no length of time will make you to forget one who was so deservedly dear to you. But, as I suppose you are advanced in years, the time of your separation will probably be shorter than it would have been, had your son lived as long as parents wish their children to live. Every day is bringing you nearer to the state, and, I hope, to the world in which he is; and, doubtless, one of God's designs in removing him before you, is to excite your diligence in looking for, and hastening to, that world where Christ is, and to render the time of your departure more welcome than it might otherwise have been. "Blessed is the man whom God chasteneth, and teacheth him out of His law." Your son is no more in this world. Your Lord is not now in this world. Yourself and husband will not be long in it. May you be blessed with the living hope of dwelling for ever in that delightful region, where He who deserves our love infinitely more than our best friends, lives and reigns. It is pleasant to think you are the parent of one who is now equal to the angels, but far pleasanter to think of being for ever with Christ, where he is to behold His glory.—I am, yours, etc., 'G. LAWSON.'

Dr Lawson to Mrs Fair, on the Death of her Husband.

'SELKIRK, *May* 1814.

'DEAR MADAM,—Allow me to express my sincere sympathy with you for the heavy stroke which has deprived you of your beloved partner; but I hope that you will be taught of God to bear it as becomes a Christian who hopes soon to be rejoined to their beloved friends, never again to be separated from them, and, what is still better, never to be separated from Him whom they love better than their dearest friends.

Perhaps you would have considered yourselves happy had you been assured that you were both to live happily together more than double the time that was promised to Hezekiah by the prophet. He had reason to believe that he was not to survive the fifty-fourth year of his age, and that he was to leave his family in a state indescribable for a king no less eminent for patriotism than piety; yet he was very thankful that he had so many days allowed him. Have not you and I no less reason to be thankful that we have lived a greater number of days, and that some of our best friends have been spared to us for so long a portion of our time, and that we have lived to see our children arrive at a period of life in which we can form a comfortable estimate of their character and probable prospects concerning their future behaviour, and their condition in another world. Consider the good as well as the evil that you have received from God, and the good which a gracious Providence brings out of the bitterest evil allotted us on earth.

'You have probably heard that we too have lost a much loved member of our family; but we did not consider him altogether lost to us, because we hoped that he was more alive to God than ever.

'I have taken the liberty to send you a small book, of which I beg your acceptance. If you look into it, it may possibly call up to your remembrance some of those passages of Scripture which were written aforetime for our consolation, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scripture, might have hope.

'With sincere sympathy and kind remembrance for yourself and family, I ever am, yours affectionately,

'G. LAWSON.'

Dr Lawson to Mr Grierson, on the Death of his Wife.

'SELKIRK, *Sept.* 1, 1815.

'DEAR FRIEND,—I am sorry that I was not in a state of health to attend the funeral of our aunt, but I know that

you would have many sympathizing friends and neighbours on the mournful occasion. You must, no doubt, mourn; but I hope you will not forget the many reasons you have patiently to submit to the will of God, and even to be thankful. We ought not to forget the blessings we have enjoyed, and still enjoy, when we are deprived even of those whom we most valued. How few have lived so long as you have done with the wife of your youth! If you had been as great a favourite of Heaven as Abraham, you could not have obtained a greater favour concerning the life of your wife than that she should die in a good old age. She could not have hoped to enjoy much pleasure in life, had it been prolonged for many years to come. She came to the grave like a shock of corn in its season, and it is to be hoped that she is now in a state of bliss infinitely better than a thousand years of the richest enjoyment which this world can afford. We were happy to hear that she had of late recovered, to a considerable degree, her health; but nothing in this world is certain, and it is well ordered that it is so: the Providence as well as the Word of God calls loudly to us to be always ready for our departure. It is a great comfort for you to be beside your daughter and her family. I doubt not that the young members of it have been taught to remember the first commandment with promise, and that you will find much satisfaction in their dutiful attentions. Young persons can do nothing better for themselves, nothing which they will in an after period of life recollect with more pleasure, than their dutiful offices to parents, whether in the first or second degree, which have rendered their declining years comfortable. But I believe you will enjoy your chief comfort in Him who was dead and is alive for evermore. Our remaining days cannot be long in this world; but our hope is in Him who hath said, Because I live, you shall live also. All the family unite in kind regards and sympathy to you, and your daughter and family.—Your sincere friend, 'G. LAWSON.'

Dr Lawson to Mrs Fairbairn.

'*February* 3, 1818.

'DEAR MADAM,—I ought to make an apology for not sooner returning an answer to the letter in which you express so much kindness to my family, and so much depression of mind on account of the affliction with which you have been visited; but what could I say on this subject that you have not already learned from the Bible? I doubt not that you have often thoughts of the precious instructions contained in it, and of the good examples of patience under affliction which it sets before us. Our loss is, that we are so unable or indisposed to apply to ourselves the important truths which we cannot but admire. We praise Job for his patience under the awful stroke which deprived him at once of his whole family, and a succeeding stroke which filled his body with ulcers, and tormented him with all the pain which the devil could inflict without killing him outright; but our own spirits fail under the afflictions which are common to men. We can give good counsel to others from the Bible; but when we are called to follow our own advice to others, the great difference between knowledge and practice soon appears.

'We, too, have been visited by the hand of God since you left the country. We have lost three dear children. Yet wherefore should those complain who are punished less than their iniquities deserve? We shall go to them, but they shall not return to us. We are too forgetful of our latter end, and we would have been still more so if all our children had been spared to us. Why should we wish to live always in a world which separates us from some of them whom we dearly love? Above all, why should we fear the thought of leaving this world, and being with Him whom, if we are Christians, our souls love above all on earth or in heaven? We all feel that the consolations of the Bible have too little effect upon us; and how often do we think of the most important

truths without feeling their power or tasting their sweetness? But the Spirit of God is pronounced to be our Comforter by the Scriptures. May that Divine Spirit fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.

'Those things are certainly best for us that will appear best an hundred years hence. I hope you are further advanced in preparation for a better world than you would have been if your worthy husband and children had been still around you. You have been sore afflicted; but what son or daughter is there whom our heavenly Father chasteneth not? He does it for our profit. Let it be our earnest desire that we may not be for ever separated from those whom we had reason to love so tenderly while they were with us in this world.—Yours most sincerely, 'G. LAWSON.'

CHAPTER X.

THE OLD DISCIPLE AND HIS DEATH-BED.

The days of the years of Dr Lawson's pilgrimage must now be summed up. He has entered what has been called 'the grasshopper's country.' Ere long it shall be recorded of him, as it is of another patriarch, 'And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.' The infirmities of old age crept upon him very gradually, and so as never seriously to interfere with the discharge of his duties, either pastoral or professorial. He became exceedingly sensitive to cold; had to be carried in a sedan-chair to church; and wore, not a gown, but a warm Scotch plaid, in the pulpit. For the same reason, the meetings of the Hall were no longer held in the church, but in his own dwelling-house. There was no one apartment in it that could accommodate the students. He so far remedied this, by throwing down a partition, and making two rooms into one. Even this, however, did not meet the necessity; and the students that could not get admission sat on the landing outside, or upon the steps of the stair that led up to the Hall-room. They did not see, but they heard the Professor. Such was their reverence for him, that, upon the whole, neither trifling, nor any degree of uproariousness, disgraced this 'outer court.' To his views and feelings under the pressure of years, he thus affectingly alludes, in a letter to a friend:—

'I certainly am become very feeble; but I have reason

to thank God that I am free from sickness, and mostly from pain. I could walk but a small part of the way to the meeting-house without extreme fatigue (he was now regularly carried to church on Sabbath), and yet I can preach for a decent length of time without much fatigue; and, I believe, I am as well heard as in my younger days. I am now past my seventieth year, and I cannot expect to recover the strength which I once had; but I am in the hand of a good God, who has preserved me hitherto, and sometimes delivered me from very alarming sicknesses. I complain not that I share in the common lot of the old; but I bless God that I live, when so many of my acquaintances are gone down to the grave, that I still enjoy many comforts, and that I can still perform the chiefest part of my ministerial work. I might have been happier in heaven than on earth; but, alas! I need all the time that has been given me to prepare to meet God in another world. May He grant that I may not, after all, be found unprepared when the day comes, on which I shall go whence I shall not return. It gives me pleasure to hear that the brethren in your neighbourhood interest themselves deeply in my welfare. I hope, if they live to old age, they will meet with that respect from their juniors which they pay now to their senior brethren.

'We must look forward to changes in this world; but we have reason to be thankful not only for our present circumstances, but likewise for our ignorance of what is before us. I know that I must die, and that soon; but I by no means wish to know when I am to be called out of the world, or what I may be called to suffer before I leave it. My desire is to be found ready to go when called by Him, to whose sovereign pleasure it belongs to order everything that concerns us. I often wonder that men should think so much on a world in which they are to dwell but for a moment, and so little upon that world in which they are to dwell for ever and ever. On this moment depends eternity.'

If there were few incidents in his days of action and usefulness, these became fewer, now that he could not even pay his accustomed visits to his brethren and neighbours. His pen, however, availed him to the last. When they could not visit him as in the days of old, they corresponded with him, and he with them. In some of these letters, the richness and beauty of matured saintship come softly and sweetly out. We still hear in them the wisdom of the Christian sage; but there are added the accents and hues of a rapidly approaching perfection. We select the following, which are the last letters he ever wrote to his trusty old friends, Mr David Greig, of Lochgelly; Dr Husband, of Dunfermline; and Robert Greig, Esq., of Lethangie.

Dr Lawson to Rev. D. Greig.

'SELKIRK, 17*th April* 1817.

'MY BELOVED FRIEND,—You had good reason to confide in my tender sympathy with your distress. You know my warm friendship for you; and you remember what sympathy I experienced from you in painful distresses, like that which you now feel. But you know that you have infinitely better reason to trust the compassion of Him who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Jesus seems not to have exerted His power to save Himself from the loss of His supposed father, who loved Him more dearly than any real father ever loved his first-born or his only son. He took part in all our griefs, that we might find ample consolation under our sorrows in thinking of Him. In that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able also to succour them that are tempted.

'I would have known almost without your information, that you and our dear sister felt a peculiar attachment to William. Your sensibilities were powerfully awakened by his infirmities; and your compassion added strength to your parental love. Now, your thoughts will be powerfully drawn back to former

scenes; and his innocency and piety must warm your hearts. Yet if any other of your dear children had been called out of the world, remembrance would have been very busy concerning them also, and might have almost persuaded you that you had loved them beyond all your other children.

'Often have I thought, with tender regret, of the innocency, of the amiable manners, of the filial affection of those of my children who were taken from me after their character was developed. But I think with pleasure on any evidences which they appeared to give of their piety. I have said, and I am persuaded you will agree with me in it, that I should wish, if such calamities were again to befall me, that it might please God to take those away who were best fitted to leave the world. The pain of separation to us is a thing that scarcely deserves a thought, compared with the eternal importance of the event to themselves.

'The days are drawing on that you and I must ourselves leave the world; and, in the view of your latter end, the departure of your son before you may save you much anxiety. Your other children will stand in much less need of a parent's care.

'I was this day visiting an amiable woman, the wife of one of my elders, who was much afflicted at the fear of losing her, for which he has, I am afraid, too good reason. He told me that he found the loss of children very heavy, but the loss of his beloved wife would be far more difficult to be borne. God is still preserving you, and may He long preserve you, to one another. Your present affliction may be the more severely felt, that it is the first of the kind; but you will surely consider what reason you have to be thankful that you are only beginning to feel such a bitter calamity.

'I have heard of William's piety from others besides you; and I hope his departure from the world will have a good effect on all who remain of the family. Whilst they rejoice in the thought that he is in a state of happiness, they will not

be able to bear the thought of an eternal separation from him whom they loved so dearly, and whose loss to them will be felt with so much pain.

'I should be glad to hear oftener from you, although no incidents of a painful kind should occur to be communicated. Letters are but an insufficient substitute for visits; yet letters from you have always given me great pleasure (unless the pleasure were counteracted by disagreeable information, which it has seldom been). It is now half a century since our warm and uninterrupted friendship commenced. Fain would I indulge the delightful hope, that, in far less space of time, our friendship will be incomparably more fervent and pure than ever.

'I wish I had as little reason to stand in fear of myself as for you.—I am, ever yours, 'G. LAWSON.'

Dr Lawson to Rev. D. Greig.

'SELKIRK, *7th May* 1818

'MY DEAR AND ANCIENT FRIEND,—I believe you will more easily forgive me than I can excuse myself, for not answering sooner your affectionate letter.

'One of my chief pleasures must now be to hear from you, as I have now no hope of ever seeing you again at Lochgelly, and I can seldom, if ever, expect to see you again at Selkirk.

'I have, however, many things to console me, and to be a subject of thanksgiving. You are still, as I am informed, enjoying a better state of health than I once thought you would ever enjoy. The remembrance of past days in your society calls up many pleasant thoughts. I am still able to enjoy the pleasure of books, and have much satisfaction in my own family. But time would fail me to mention all the favours which both you and I have received, and still receive, from the gracious providence of God; and, if I am what I profess to be, my intercourse of friendship with you, and with some others whom I love, is yet in its beginning. Much do

I wish that you may be yet spared some years on earth, to your family and friends; but the years assigned to us in this world must give place to eternal ages. How delightful it is to think of being rejoined to those beloved friends who were once separated from us on earth! But unspeakably more delightful must it be, to the lovers of Christ, to think of being for ever present with Him, who loved them, and gave Himself for them, and is gone to prepare a place for them in His Father's house.

'I do not recollect whether you have heard from me since I lost a dearly beloved member of my family,—my youngest daughter. It was the loss of one of the richest of my earthly comforts. But I had good reason to think that our loss was great gain to herself. She had been pleasant to us in her life, and she still affords us pleasant recollections and pleasant hopes.

'You, too, will be thankful that you have reason for such pleasant thoughts concerning the second child of whom you have been bereaved. God grant that you may always have a rich source of comfort in your surviving children. A very large proportion of our earthly comfort depends upon our children. I believe, if young persons knew and considered how much of the happiness of their parents is involved in their conduct, it would be a powerful stimulus, at least, to decency of manners.

'I am confident that my kind friend and sister still remembers me with the partiality of a friend, both to herself and to her husband. She must be happy and thankful that a husband so well and so justly beloved has been so long spared to her, and that her health of body is not worse than it is.

'Cheering are the prospects that our religion gives us. Blessed be God, that, when fears take possession of our souls, we are authorized still to trust in Him who is abundant in goodness and truth to sinners. Often have I thought with pleasure on the publican's prayer, and its happy success.

'All my friends share with me in my warm attachment to the friend of my youth, and in my cordial desires for grace and peace to every member of his family. Forget not to communicate to your brother of Lethangie, and to his companion in life, my warm wishes for their welfare, and that of their family. Never can I forget the place where I spent so many of the happiest hours of my youth. I should like, also, to be remembered to my old friend of Turfhills, and to your brother Mr Robert.—I ever am, most affectionately yours,

'G. LAWSON.'

Dr Lawson to Dr Husband.

'SELKIRK, 26*th July* 1819.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—I need not tell you how much I rejoice to hear of your deliverance from your late distress. You have now, I hope, found pleasure more than sufficient to compensate all the pain you felt in the day of distress. Health is now more than doubly pleasant when it is restored to us after sickness.

'Although I have lost many of my early friends, I cannot be too thankful that some not less dear than those which I have lost are still spared to me. Some of them have been taken from me that I may not be too fond of the present life, but others are left that I may not become weary of the world.

'What space of life is left to you or me, or to any of our friends, we cannot say. I often think of the time as not now far distant, when I shall be taken from my friends, or they from me. When that time comes, we will have reason to be thankful that we have been spared to ourselves and to one another so long. And if we look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, it will fill us with joy that we are for ever to be rejoined with those whom we most dearly loved, and whom we had most reason to love.

'I would have been angry with your colleague for not answering my letter sooner, were it not for a maxim which I

wish to observe, not to be displeased with anything done, or omitted to be done, by those whom I esteem, till I know the reasons of their conduct.

'If I were such as I have been in former days, you would long since have seen me; yet I am very thankful that I am such as I am. I do not feel my friendly affections diminished, and I would gladly hope that the time is now approaching when they will be more fervent, and give me more happiness than they ever could give me in this world.

'I would gladly follow the example of our friend Mr Gilfillan, who professed that he did not feel the days of old age less pleasant than the days of youth.

'I believe it is only the humble hope of a life everlasting beyond the grave that can make such language the language of truth. But are we not called to look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life? I am far from being such as many of my friends have been, but I have the same sure grounds of faith laid down for me in the Word of God, and the authority of God requires me to believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ.

'One of my chief remaining comforts is, that I can still read and write. I will be very happy to hear from you as soon as you find it consistent with your state of body and mind to favour me with intelligence concerning an object so interesting to me as your health and happiness.—I am, ever yours, 'G. LAWSON.'

Dr Lawson to Dr Husband.

'SELKIRK, *September* 1819.

'DEAR FRIEND,—I rejoice greatly in your deliverance, although I am informed that you still think it advisable to return to the mineral waters which you found so salutary. A partial restoration of health I have found exceedingly delightful after sickness. And the God who hath delivered and doth deliver, will, I trust, yet deliver you. What reason

have we to love the Lord our God for the many deliverances granted to us or to those who were dear to us as ourselves He that is our God is the God of salvation.

'You have met, however, with a heavy trial in the death of your grandchild. But we who live so long, and have been blessed with families and friends, need not be surprised that we meet with such afflictions. If God has spared us to old age, we have lived longer than the greater part of our race has done for these many thousand years past. Let us be thankful that some, that many, of our friends are left when others are taken from us.

'The day is coming when we must be taken away from our families and friends. In reading the lives of men who are now gone from the world, we find that many more of them have died before than after seventy years. I do not recollect that any of the sovereigns of England, before George II., lived so long, except Elizabeth. None of the kings of David's family, after himself, attained that age. Through the long-suffering of God I have now gone beyond that period. God grant me and you length of days for ever and ever in a better world.

'It would be ungrateful to our great Benefactor to indulge gloomy reflections on the pleasures that are past never to return. Ought we not to think with delight and thankfulness on the comforts with which many of our former days were sweetened? And ought not Christians to rejoice in hope of better days than they ever could enjoy on earth? I know that you are still my cordial friend, and doubt not that you often remember me in your prayers.

'You doubtless rejoice with me that our beloved friend Mr Greig has enjoyed such a degree of health for a considerable time past. Yet the time cannot be far distant when one or other of us must be lost to the survivors for the little time that will be left to them. But the interval will not be long. Although our departed friends will not return to us, we shall

soon go to them if we are members of the same body. All that concerns us is in the hands of Him who knows far better than we do what is good and what is not good for us.—I am, ever yours and Mrs Husband's sincere friend,

'G. LAWSON.'

Dr Lawson to Robert Greig, Esq., of Lethangie.

'SELKIRK, 10*th April* 1819.

'DEAR SIR,—The cordial friendship with which I was in some days of life favoured by the family of Lethangie, has always disposed me to take a warm interest in its prosperity. It was in your house that, more than half a century ago, I formed that warm friendship with Mr David Greig, which has been one of the chief pleasures of my life. You will not therefore wonder that I heard with grief of the departure from this world of your elder brother, although he had lived longer than most other men live in this world. However long the death of those whom we love and esteem is deferred, it must be deeply felt when the separating stroke takes place. His widow must deeply feel the loss of the beloved half of herself; his children must feel the loss of an affectionate father. His brothers and sisters must all be afflicted with the stroke that has removed from their eyes the elder branch of their father's family. I thought you was likely to feel the deepest depression of spirits, after having lived with him in the same house between seventy and eighty years. I think few in the kingdom have lived so long in the same house with a brother; and I suppose your manner of being together was such as not to diminish, but always to increase, your mutual affection, and so to render the pain of separation more severe.

'But I hope your sorrows and the sorrows of your friends on this occasion will be regulated by reason and religion, and that it will not be unattended with that consolation which our religion is so well calculated to inspire. Your brother, I

trust, was one of that happy number of which it is said, 'that they shall never die, in that though they were dead yet shall they live.' The separating stroke, too, will be useful to yourself; it will contribute much to detach your affection from those objects to which they too eagerly cleave, and to invigorate your preparation for that world into which you and I must soon go. The last letter which Dr Park's friends (the traveller) in this country received from him gave them an account of the death of a pious brother, Mr Anderson. And I never forget one of the observations made in it, which I believe has been since that time verified. He said that he hoped the death of his friend, and his dying behaviour, would be a happy means of preparing him for his own death when that event should come. Whilst you feel the stroke of the rod of God, I hope you will be thankful that you so long enjoyed the pleasure of his society, and that so many pleasant friends are left to you.

'You and I have now lost a great part of the friends of our youth. I think none of my old acquaintance of your neighbourhood are now left, except Mr Henderson, of Turfhills. I am not sure whether Mr Stedman (the weaver in Kinross) is still alive. How dreadful would it be for me to be for ever separated from such friends as Andrew Swanston or George Henderson; but it would be infinitely more dreadful to be for ever separated from Jesus Christ. We will thank God hereafter for many things that are now very unpleasant to us. You will, I hope, see one day reason to bless God for all the privations which you have suffered. Those things are certainly best for us that do most good to our souls; and Solomon tells us that by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.

'When we look forward to the day of our own death, we sometimes feel anxious fears, lest we should be finally rejected by our Judge. Alas, how many bad things are to be found with us, which would strike us with horror, if we had not

such clear discoveries of infinite mercy with God! You and I may find it difficult to know whether our hearts are right in the sight of God. But one thing we know (and oh how delightful is the knowledge of it!), that there is forgiveness with God, and that Jesus Christ has said, "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." To whom, blessed Jesus, shall we come, but unto Thee? Behold, we come unto Thee, for Thou art able and willing to save to the uttermost. Lord, we believe; help our unbelief. I have not the pleasure of being much acquainted with your sister-in-law, or with the young family; but they will not be displeased to hear from you that I heartily sympathize with them. I hope the young persons will endeavour to walk in the path that will lead to a happy reunion with those friends whom they had most reason to love. May grace and peace be with you, and with all your friends, living and dying.—I am, your sincere friend,

'GEORGE LAWSON.'

The rumour now went all over the country that the venerable Lawson, of Selkirk, was dying. All that personally knew him were made sad by it. They felt that one of their nearest and dearest of earthly friends was passing away. The Church at large anticipated the days of her mourning for one of her 'princes and great men.' His own sons were most deeply touched, as we read in what follows from his son George

Rev. George Lawson to Dr Lawson.

'KILMARNOCK, *April* 30, 1819.

'DEAR FATHER,—Although I have nothing of any moment to communicate, yet I write at this time in consequence of having heard that of late your health has not been so vigorous as before. You will not wonder that, hearing this report from different quarters, I should feel much surprised that I had heard nothing of it from Selkirk. This circumstance

even led me to think that the report was totally unfounded, till on hearing, a few days ago, from Andrew, I learned that he had been to see you; and though he found you better than report had represented, yet you were more infirm than usual. This led me the more to wonder that I had not heard directly from you on the subject. I should think it is not necessary to say that, in such a case, I must naturally feel great anxiety to know how the truth really stands.

'*May 5th.*—I have been, in some measure, informed by some brethren who heard of your state at the Synod, and am unspeakably gratified to learn that you are considerably better; and I am sure that this intelligence is gratifying not to me alone, but to all who feel an interest in the prosperity of religion, and more especially to the body with which you are peculiarly connected. I see, by looking over the list in the almanack, that, so far as I can judge, more than a hundred of the ministers have been under your immediate tutorage as Professor.

'I was a good deal interested in meeting, the other day, a man who lives in this neighbourhood, who heard you, at Burnshields, before you were ordained. He says that he heard you both preach and examine; and that, in those days, you were so bashful, that, in examining, you commonly kept your face covered with your hand.

'Some of Mr Jeffray's note-books have fallen into my possession. In one of them are some letters, apparently transcribed on account of the point and naivetè and laconic brevity which is in the expression. One of them is from Hume, the historian, to a Professor, requesting a ticket to his class for a student who was too poor to pay for it. Another is from you to Dr Caverhill, requesting medical advice for the wife of one of your elders. I mention this, though you may perhaps think it insignificant, merely because I was both amused, as you may perhaps be, and gratified to find you thus distinguished and associated in any way with Hume. I have

lent the book, or I would transcribe them. That of Hume is to this effect: "—— is a Christian, and, like his Master, has little to recommend him but his poverty. If you can help him on his road to heaven, by giving him a ticket for your class, you will oblige, etc." Yours is something to this effect: After telling who the person is, you request his advice, and desire him to place it to the account of the Friend of man and the Saviour of sinners. But there was something more of it which added to the zest.

'I understand that I am appointed to supply for you on the last Sabbath in August, and the first in September: so that I hope to see you before a very long period elapse; and I trust to find you in as good health as can be expected.—Your most affectionate son, 'GEORGE LAWSON.'

The following letters to his son Andrew wind up his correspondence with that most amiable and excellent man:—

'SELKIRK, 1819.

'DEAR ANDREW,—Your late narrow escape from your perilous situation, I hope, will never be forgotten by you. Life will be a blessing indeed to you, if you are duly careful to employ every day in work which may give you pleasure, on reflection, during your future years. Never will you have learned too much of the Book of God. All who have the work of the ministry in view, ought, in particular, to be well acquainted with the two Epistles to Timothy, and that to Titus. It is a great privilege to have the opportunity of preaching the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. May you be long enabled to perform that most honourable and important work, in a manner fitted to edify your hearers, and with profit to your own soul. May God still preserve your life; and may He richly furnish you for any service to which He may call you. But if we hope for such grace from God, we must use the means which He has appointed. We know

how Timothy was so richly furnished for the work of an evangelist. If God spares us for years to come, we ought to adore His long-suffering, and to make such an improvement of His providential dispensations, as will afford us comfort when the time of our departure from this world of sin and suffering draweth near. Wishing you every blessing, spiritual and temporal, I ever am, your affectionate father,

'G. LAWSON.'

'SELKIRK, *April* 1819.

'DEAR ANDREW,—Your wish that I should write some memoir of the days of my youth comes too late; it is but a very indistinct account that I could now give of my younger years. But should you be favoured with a life as long as mine, it may be useful to you to have, many years hence, some memorials of what is now passing in your mind, or family, or congregation. Should my youthful exercises of mind be recorded, they would bear no comparison with those of some of our fathers; but I would fain hope that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ I shall be saved even as they. My health continues much as you saw it. I have great reason to be thankful for two things: that I am little troubled with pain, and that I find little difficulty in performing the public work of the sanctuary. I have warnings in my body that I am approaching my long home, but I desire to look for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. If my hopes do not deceive me, I will again see your amiable predecessor, and be joined with many beloved friends, from whom it would be terrible to be for ever separated; but to be with Christ is far better. . . . —Your affectionate father,

'G. LAWSON.'

'SELKIRK, *August* 1819.

'DEAR ANDREW,—I am very glad to see one of your friends in this place, and to hear that you still give satis-

faction to your hearers. May God render you more and more acceptable, and, what is of far more importance, useful to your hearers. I find that you do not grudge the labour of preaching when opportunity offers. Why should we? How thankful ought we to be for opportunities to do good to the souls of men, especially when we can do it without inconvenience or danger to ourselves, to which our fathers were often exposed, and to which missionaries in many parts of the world are still exposed. I have read a few of the last published volumes of Chalmers' Sermons with much satisfaction. He observes, among other things, that there is a very great difference between the approbation of sermons and receiving benefit from them, and that earnest prayer is no less necessary for the Divine blessing upon our labours, than the exertion of our powers of body and mind in performing them. This, indeed, we might learn from Paul; but how often do we overlook in practice what ought to dwell always in our mind!—Your affectionate father 'G. LAWSON.'

SELKIRK, *Dec.* 14, 1819.

'DEAR ANDREW,—I was much pleased with the sentiments you express in your last letter, as to the success of your ministry. This is a matter of far greater importance, in the eye of every faithful minister, than the esteem in which his pulpit labours are held by his hearers.

'You will probably have heard, before this reach you, of the sudden departure from this world of my good friend Mr Elder, who has been thirty-eight years my neighbour. His death was quite unexpected; but, by his sudden removal, he was probably preserved from much pain, and from much anxiety about the cares that might have occupied his mind in the prospect of death. No man has left fewer enemies, and few have left a greater number of mourners. He was deservedly much beloved by his congregation.

'We must look forward to changes in this world; but we

have reason to be thankful, not only for our present circumstances, but likewise for our ignorance of futurity. I know that I must die, and I know that, at my time of life, I cannot reasonably expect such continuance of health as I usually enjoyed at your age; but I by no means wish to know when I am to be called out of the world, or what I may be called on to suffer before I leave it. My desire is, that I may be found ready to go when I am called by Him to whose sovereign pleasure it belongs to order everything that concerns me. May the Lord be ever with you.—Your affectionate father, 'G. LAWSON.'

Old age has been sometimes represented as selfish and unsympathizing. It was not so in the case of Dr Lawson. His heart was as fresh with the dews of friendship at the close as at the beginning of his career, and overflowed with generous sentiment to the last. A very pleasing savour comes from the following expressions of his regard for the comfort of the friends whom he tries to strengthen and counsel:—

Dr Lawson to an Old Friend who had lost his Wife and Seven Children.

'DEAR SIR,—Though you be surprised, I flatter myself you will not be displeased to hear from an old friend, especially when I state that my single design in addressing you is to endeavour to impart that consolation of which, from your numerous and heavy trials, you can scarcely fail to be greatly in need.

'What a chequered scene is the life of man! How calm and serene may the morning be, and yet by mid-day how many dark clouds may obscure the sky,—what boisterous storms may rage! Alas, how painfully have you felt this verified in your history! 'Tis but yesterday since, together, we, free from corroding care, plied our pleasing vocation at P——, and at evening, set free, rambled by the light of the

moon amid the neighbouring hills, in an interchange of sentiments the recollection of which still recalls to my mind many delightful associations; and since that time you have entered into the connubial relation, and have seen your children springing up like olive plants around your table; and now again you have been deprived of all, have buried in their graves many of your most ardent affections and sanguine hopes, and been left to pursue your journey alone.

'These, my dear sir, are heavy trials indeed, and I do sincerely feel for you the deepest sympathy. I acknowledge, however, that my sympathy or that of any mere creature, can do but little for you; but I may be allowed to remind you of the efficiency of His sympathy who breaks not the bruised reed nor quenches the smoking flax, who wept at the grave of His friend Lazarus, and who, though exalted to heaven, still wears our nature, and feels acutely every pang that rends the heart of any of His people. He is a merciful as well as a faithful high priest, and it is this attribute especially that renders Him so suitable to His people's necessities while they dwell in this land of sorrow.

'Your case is very hard, yet it might have been worse. Job lost all his children, and that when grown to maturity, by a violent death: his wife was spared to him only to make his trial heavier, his body was smitten with a painful and loathsome disease, and he was deprived of all his possessions; yet such was the influence of Divine grace upon his soul, that he could say from the heart, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." That grace is as free to you as it was to him. Use then, I entreat you, the means of obtaining it by humble and fervent prayer. "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find." God can make up in various ways for such bereavements. He did so to Job, and He is able to do so to you. Only believe, and you will see the salvation of the Lord.

'How comfortable to reflect that our pious friends de-

parted, are not lost! Their souls are happy, and their bodies, though reduced for a season to their primeval element, shall live anew. If we are followers of them, in so far as they were of Christ, we shall meet them in a more felicitous state of being, where the impossibility of separation shall form an important element of enjoyment. . . .—Farewell, from

'GEORGE LAWSON.'

Dr Lawson to a Student.

'SELKIRK, *Aug.* 1818.

'DEAR SIR,—I was sorry to hear that you had determined to change your views as to the study of divinity, although I could not but respect the motives by which you were understood to be actuated. There is, indeed, an awful responsibility attached to the ministerial office; yet I am disposed to suspect that your sense of this responsibility has suggested measures for your adoption, which you will not see good reason, in the future part of your life, to approve. What would have been the result, if no man of a tender conscience could have taken upon him an office of such responsibility? Would not truth have fallen in our streets, and in every part of the earth? Would not the dispensations of the ordinances of Christ have been left to those who studied more to please man than God?

'You thought yourself unqualified to undertake the ministerial office, because you could not trust to your ability, or to your inflexible integrity, for performing the duties of it in a right manner; and surely you had no great reason to trust either to your talents or your resolutions. But ought you not to have trusted in Christ for grace to perform duties to which you seemed evidently called by Divine Providence. Every faithful minister is strong, not in himself, but in the grace which is in Christ Jesus, through whom we may be enabled to perform with acceptance the most difficult duties. Without it, we are unable to perform aright those we account the most

simple. I know not what line of life you have in view; but certainly, whatever it is, you will have duties to perform and temptations to avoid. That you may perform the one and be preserved from the other, you must depend on the grace that is in Christ Jesus; but is not this grace as sufficient for ministers of the Gospel as for men of any other profession?

'Do you not trust to Christ for salvation to your soul? But have we not the same ground for committing the salvation of our souls into His hand, that we have for trusting in His strength for enabling us acceptably to perform the duties of any situation in which He is pleased to place us? "We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves," says the Apostle; and yet the same believer says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." I hope you will give due weight to the use that some may make of your relinquishing that profession to which Providence has directed your studies. They will allege that serious impressions of religion tend to disqualify men for experiencing that comfort which is enjoyed by others, and to unfit them for the performance of other duties which they ought to fulfil. Some may even think that doubts about the principles of our holy faith have obtained entrance into your mind. We cannot, indeed, prevent men from entertaining groundless suspicions, nor ought we to sin against the light of our own conscience, to prevent sin in others; yet we ought to avoid everything that may be a stumbling-block to the weak, or that may give occasion of offence to them that seek it. We cannot entertain too humble thoughts of ourselves, but we must not place humility of mind in a disbelief of the precious promises which God hath given us to prepare us for undertaking any service which He requires. I hope, before you finally relinquish your present employment, you will seek counsel from Him who has promised to direct the steps of them who acknowledge Him in all their ways.—I am, your sincere friend,

'G. Lawson.'

Dr Lawson to Mrs Vogan.

'SELKIRK, *April* 29, 1818.

'DEAR FRIEND,—I cannot now, as in former days, have the pleasure of seeing you and my friend Mr V. in your own house; so I must with the pen express my sympathy with you for the loss of a well-beloved sister whom God has been pleased to remove from our eyes, that she may enjoy, I hope, a felicity unspeakably transcending all that she could ever have enjoyed in that society which this world affords. I never saw friends more deeply penetrated with concern and grief than her relations. I most sincerely sympathize with them, and especially with her husband, whose future days will be clouded with the remembrance of past pleasures, never to return. Your sister possessed in a great degree, amongst other virtues, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. She well deserved, and she completely gained, the affection of all who had the pleasure of knowing her. I had reason to believe, from conversations with her, that her troubles and deliverances were blessed to her; and that the God of mercy was preparing her, by previous dispensations of providence, for that important change which was awaiting her.

'We have lost many pleasant friends within a short period. You are aware that we have lately lost a very pleasant member of our own family. Our friends will, when a few more days or years are past, lose us. How dreadful would it be for us to be for ever separated from those we had most reason to love on earth! But the grace which abounded in them, will, I hope, preserve us from an eternal separation. God grant that you may enjoy the comforts of religion through life, and at your latter end.—I am, ever your sincere friend,

'G. LAWSON.'

There is something exceedingly affecting in seeing old and tried Christian friends, who had together struggled up the

'Hill Difficulty,' taking such solemn farewells of each other as is done in the following communication from one of his most attached friends and devoted admirers—Mr Macfarlane, of Dunfermline. They stand for a moment on the summit of 'Nebo,' and disappear :—

Rev. James Macfarlane to Dr Lawson.

'DUNFERMLINE, 17*th July* 1819.

'DEAR SIR,—I am extremely sorry that your very friendly epistle should have been so long unanswered. The reason is this. Colleague and I, some days before your letter reached Dunfermline, had gone to Pitcaithley Wells, from which we did not return till last night. Owing to the inconsideration of friends at home, your letter was not forwarded to me. This I beg you will sustain as an apology for my apparent neglect. Colleague is greatly better for drinking of the water of Pitcaithley. I entertain sanguine hopes that he will soon be quite well. Perhaps you have heard of medicinal wells at Dunblane. After a few days' rest we propose going there to drink of them for a week or two. By that time we hope that, by the blessing of Him who saith, "I am the Lord that healeth thee," we shall return to our habitations in peace and health.

Yes, Doctor, our dear friends are dropping away one after another, and *our* time must come—must *soon* come. In reflecting on this, I sometimes chide myself for feeling uneasy at the thought of going the way I shall never return, especially when I consider that, though I am to part with friends whom I highly value and tenderly love, yet I shall go to meet with them whom I more highly valued and more tenderly loved. But I am bewildered when I begin to reflect how departed spirits associate with each other, and communicate their feelings and sentiments. Were you now by my side, you would probably check me by saying, "What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter." But I am forgetting that this

is Saturday, and that I have to prepare both for a part of the public services of to-morrow at home, and for doing duty at Limekilns, where the sacrament of our Lord's Supper is dispensed. Colleague is to preach a short sermon to our own people on the afternoon of to-morrow, which he has not done for four Sabbaths. I had almost forgotten your kind inquiries after my own situation. In the month of April I had a small shock, somewhat like that which has carried off Mr Duncanson, and it is not improbable that another and severer shock awaits me. At present, however, I am very well, only occasionally troubled with a dizziness in my head. Both colleague and I were a good deal moved by your simple but pathetic remark, "I cannot now come over to visit you, but I will never forget you." And shall we behold our friend no more in this world? O to be fitted for that glorious world, where all who die in the Lord shall meet to part no more for ever! Colleague most cordially unites with me in the kindest regards to you, Mrs Lawson, and family.—Excuse haste, and believe me, dear Doctor, ever yours,

'JAMES MACFARLANE.'

A few months only before his death, there was an arrival at Selkirk which threw the inmates of the manse into unusual excitement. This was no less a personage than his ancient friend Dr Waugh, who was now on his last tour to Scotland, on the business, so dear to his large heart, of the London Missionary Society. The two old men embraced each other, heart to heart. They had seen each other only once or twice since the days when, on 'Stitchel Brae,' they had met and worshipped. The present was forgotten, and the future also for a time gave place to the memories of that never to be forgotten period. They talked of communion Sabbaths, especially at Stitchel, and the fires from the old altars there seemed again to be kindled before them. Of their pious intimacy there we have heard. An eye and ear witness has

told the compiler, that she remembers still of Lawson of Selkirk, Waugh of London, Elder of Newtown, and Young of Jedburgh, having at one time assisted her husband at Stitchel; and that, when other strangers had left, Mr Lawson and Mr Waugh remained over the Monday evening. Of that evening's conversation between the two, Mr M'Lae used to say, that listening to them enabled him in some measure to realize what would be the happiness of heaven. The subsequent intercourse of these two friends was, of necessity, abridged by Mr Waugh's translation to London. He had been ordained at Newtown only a few years after Dr Lawson's settlement in Selkirk; and though his ministry there scarcely reached two years, its savour went over all that country side, —so that his first and only sacrament there was attended by a great multitude of the surrounding congregations. After listening to the address which he gave upon that occasion at the Lord's table, Mr Coventry, who was assisting him, exclaimed, 'O what lofty expressions! what exalted views of the perfections of the Almighty! O what a bright star this young man promises to be!'

In writing to Mrs Waugh, Dr Waugh briefly refers to this his last interview with his old friend: 'I found Dr Lawson and family in good health, except for his deafness and partial imbecility in his limbs, which furnishes an opportunity to his good people of providing a sedan-chair for him, to carry him, as the deacons of Ephesus carried the aged Apostle John, to the pulpit every Sabbath. His folk gave me a good collection—L.21—besides a guinea which a friend of Alexander's —Mr Pringle, of Whytbank—sent over to me.'

In the union of the two great branches of the Secession Church Dr Lawson took a profound interest. Along with his friend Dr Husband, he helped it on by all the means in his power, partaking in no degree of the shyness or fears of several of the brethren on both sides. It is truly refreshing to find such catholicity of spirit among these early magnates

of our Church. In reference to the union, we find Dr Husband, in a letter to Dr Lawson, thus expressing himself: 'We are to have business of a very important nature before us at next meeting of Synod. The idea of union and co-operation among the friends of truth is *very pleasant*, and ought, if possible, to be carried into practice. But whether the terms of union between us and our Antiburgher brethren can be such as will answer the purposes of edification, remains yet to be seen. We had a very agreeable meeting at the committee. The brethren on the other side, almost all of whom were perfect strangers to me, appeared in a very respectable light, both in regard to talent and Christian temper.' Dr Lawson was asked by the late Dr Beattie what were his sentiments upon this contemplated union. The Professor expressed his high approbation of it, and added, somewhat facetiously, 'Perhaps, however, it might be proper to ask some satisfaction from the Antiburghers for having excommunicated us Burghers.' Much as he longed to witness its consummation, this pleasure was denied him. He had gone over to the general assembly of the church of the first-born eight months previously. Had he lived till September 1820 he would have graced it with his venerable presence, and blessed it with his prayers. His interest indeed, and his zeal in all the great public religious questions of the day, never flagged. There was life in the old man for them all to the last. In his views and feelings upon the missionary enterprise, he was ahead of his times. To the London Society, of which Dr Waugh was one of the founders, he gave his heart, his hand, and his purse. It must have been no ordinary influence in that direction, exerted by him upon a purely pastoral congregation, that secured them a collection of twenty guineas for missions. Many churches even now do not so liberally. But it was so with him, all through life, that his discernment and zeal secured a fair measure of support for every good and holy object. The man was so

thoroughly unselfish, and so full of faith, that he was up to the mark in all points of duty before many of his contemporaries were moved. God be thanked, the Church has many such men now; but their number with us might have been fewer, had not Lawson and his associates previously ploughed up the fallow ground. It is well known that many, if not all, who studied under him, were the ready and generous supporters of the missionary revival. And though their own piety led them into this path, the memory of the Selkirk divine held up their feet so that they did not slide. That Dr Lawson thought thus, and would have acted thus, decided the waverer. When the amiable Horner died, his friend, Sydney Smith, said, 'It will be useful for us, in the great occasions of life, to reflect how Horner would act and think in them.' And so it ought to be with all who name the name of Christ—our great pattern, as well as our sole propitiation. We should consider, in our varied conditions of life, how He would act, and go and do likewise, earnestly desiring that the same mind that was in Him may be in us.

Only a very few weeks before his death he received an unexpected mark of esteem from a well-known member of Parliament, who had long known and appreciated his great worth. The M.P. wished to distribute some charities in and about Selkirk, and in looking round for an almoner he fixed upon Dr Lawson. After politely apologizing for taking such a liberty, he says, in the letter embodying the request, 'I own that I am emboldened to do so from the known and admired excellence of your heart, from the tried philanthropy of your character, and the honourable age of a life passed in the exercise of every virtue. These sentiments I only entertain in common with every one who knows you, either personally or by report, and by none are they more truly estimated than by myself.' The good old man cheerfully consented to act as requested, and this was among the very last of his 'good works' ere he retired to die.

Before he laid down that pen—that busy and useful pen—for the last time, he wrote the following letter to Dr Thomson, of Coldstream. It is chiefly interesting, as being the last of Dr Lawson's. In a few days thereafter he was in heaven.

Dr Lawson to Dr Thomson.

'SELKIRK, *Jan.* 20, 1820.

'MY DEAR SIR,—Finding a convenient opportunity, I improve it to express my sympathy with you in the loss of your worthy father. I know the sensibility of your heart, but I likewise know that you will endeavour to regulate all your affections with a view to eternity, on which perpetually we ought to govern our minds in such a manner as that our happiness will not depend on any earthly object. Although you are yet in middle life, you have lost many relations or friends, in whose society much of your present happiness was placed. You will probably lose more of them, if you live many years longer; but you will bless God that He has left you other friends in whose society you take pleasure, and that you have not in reality lost those who are removed out of your sight. We have reason to believe that the inhabitants of heaven are not left in ignorance of what is done on earth; if they take pleasure in the repentance of the ungodly, they must rejoice likewise in the holy conversation of the friends whom they left on earth.

'I have sometimes thought of the horrors that must seize the soul of Judas Iscariot, when he thought of his fellow-apostles still with their Master. And it is a powerful motive with me to be vigilant, that I may not be a castaway, that many whom I dearly loved are now with Christ. How awful would it be to be eternally separated from them! They have been removed from me to a better world, for which they were far better prepared than I hitherto am; yet I hope that, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, I shall be saved even as they. If we are Christians, we are come to the

spirits of just men made perfect. We are still members of the same body, though in different worlds, and the time of their separation from us is but a little moment compared with the duration of those ages in which we shall again enjoy their society. May God spare your family, and give you always much pleasure in every member of it here and in a better world.—Yours affectionately, 'G. LAWSON.'

On the 29th of January 1820, the great bell of St Paul's, London, was tolled. It was the death-knell of George III. It was also the warning given to the Selkirk divine to go to his last work in his much-loved library. He determined to improve the decease of the sovereign, and prepared a discourse upon the subject from Psalm lxxxii. 6, 7,—'I have said, ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High: but ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.' On Sabbath, the 6th of February, he was carried in his chair for the last time to the house of God, and closed his long public career by delivering this sermon in honour of one of the best of kings. The people were greatly affected by his appearance, the change in his voice, and the ominous nature of the subject. They foreboded the truth that this should be his last sermon from that pulpit. They were specially impressed with his concluding appeals, which were made to the praise and glory of 'the King immortal, invisible, and eternal,' and to the duty of all to love, believe in, and obey Jesus the King of saints. Having finished this service, which was rendered in great weakness of body, he was carried home, and that pulpit knew him no more for ever.

Of this his last sermon, Dr Belfrage says: 'It was not a fulsome panegyric on departed greatness, but a solemn admonition to the living. While eloquence, not content with decking the throne, garnishes the sepulchre, piety feels itself impelled by the death of kings, to give effect to those lessons on the vanity of man, which are too often forgotten amidst

the pomp of the world. Dr Lawson (on this occasion) read out a portion of the 90th Psalm, to be sung by the congregation, and piously applied it to himself. He felt that he had arrived at the limits of life, and that his strength was sinking to the dust; but in him it was seen that, for an old age of piety and wisdom, religion has provided her sweet consolations and her reviving hope, like nature reserving its mildest lustre and its softest calm for the setting sun.' In a few days after this effort, he fell asleep like one of the princes of Israel. And this was the manner of the good man's death:—

He had, a short while before, received a visit from his beloved son George. Hearing that symptoms of an unmistakeable character had appeared, he had hastened from Kilmarnock to obtain his father's blessing, and, in all likelihood, to close his eyes at death. He was, however, under the necessity of returning to the west, while the old man was yet moving about. Under the impression that their parting was to be final, the dying father took his son to the well-known room where they oft had studied and prayed. They knelt down together, and he offered up supplications for his son. When they arose, he suddenly charged him, in the name of his God and Redeemer, to be a faithful minister of the New Testament. He then gave him his blessing, and they parted to meet no more on earth.

His sufferings now became severe. He could not rest in bed, and had to assume the sitting posture, both by night and day. But he never waxed impatient. He was full of faith, and much in prayer. There was no cloud upon his view of the future. 'For my part,' he declared, 'I am firmly persuaded, that all my hope must rest upon the richness and sovereignty of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. I am persuaded that millions already in hell were far less criminal, when they left the world, than I have been. I am sensible that I can never make myself a fitter subject of mercy than I am at this moment; and that, therefore, I must follow to the

pit those miserable wretches that are groaning under the wrath of God, unless I am plucked as a brand out of the burning. A doctrine so necessary to my hope and peace, as the sovereignty of Divine mercy, I hope never to renounce.' He firmly believed, that so soon as he died he should be with Christ. At one time a member of the family repeated to him the sublime words of the apostle, 'I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' He replied that he highly appreciated such an assurance, and the blessed hope with which he was cleaving to the Lord. 'I have not had a doubt of my security for twenty years,' said one to Robert Hall, whose reply was characteristic, 'Then you will give me leave to doubt for you.' During life Dr Lawson was careful never to express himself so confidently as to his safety; but on his death-bed he did not hesitate to do so, and no witness of that solemn scene would ever have thought of 'doubting for him.' The manner, however, in which he expressed it evinced the holy modesty of his spirit; and it was evident, from what followed, that he wished that his Lord's translating hand should find him kneeling at the footstool of His mercy. 'It is, indeed,' he said with emphasis, 'my full persuasion and sweet hope, that I shall never be separated from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus my Lord.'

His last night and day were almost sleepless. He sat upon his chair, waiting on the summons, but not wearying for it. The short prayers he put up from time to time were some of them audible, and others not. They referred to the present and everlasting well-being of his family, his congregation, his pupils, and his brethren, and to the filling of the whole earth, in due time, with the glory of the Redeemer.

On the afternoon of Monday, the 21st of February, towards sun-setting, groups of people were seen surrounding

the door of the manse. It was known in the town that Dr Lawson was near his end. Not a sound was heard, unless it were a whisper from one to another concerning the godliness of the dying pastor, and the loss which his death should be to the Church. Every now and then the door slowly opened, and the 'bulletin' was given. At last the town clock struck the hour of ten, when a subdued lamentation was heard coming from the room where the old man was gaining the victory, or rather where he had gained it; for the door opened again: 'He is gone,' was the message, and that crowd took it silently away with them, each one to his own home, sorrowing, like the elders of Ephesus, that he should see his face no more. The work within the house had been very calm and very solemn. His family stood around the chair where the dying Christian sat. Some of his most dearly loved elders were also in this room, and two of his brethren from a distance came to comfort him. Very little was said on either side. He had not strength to converse, and they were too sad and too full of holy awe to profane the silence. They looked upon him with tearful eye, for he had been indeed as an angel of God to them in the wilderness. Blessing a gentleman at his side who had been very kind to him, he said, 'I can only thank you; but God, I trust, will abundantly reward you.'

His son Andrew had arrived from Ecclefechan. Among other things, he said to his father, 'Dearest father, what is the ground of your hope and comfort in this trying hour?'

'All my hope,' he replied, 'and all my comfort, spring out of the mercy of God, as manifested in the mediation of Jesus Christ. Here are my only stay, and strength, and consolation.'

Some allusion was made to the useful life he had led, when he replied, 'No, no. Had I been such a man as Mr Brown of Haddington, or Mr Johnston of Ecclefechan, I would have done far more good. I have done little, very little.'

About ten o'clock he raised his eyes and looked around.

He then seemed to put forth the last remains of his strength, and called his family, one after the other, to come near to him. They did so. He took each of them by the hand, blessed them severally, and bade them farewell in the most simple, devout, and affecting manner. After this, he lifted up both his hands, and, casting a look upon the company assembled to see him die, he said, with a tremulous voice, 'The Lord my God bless you all.'

Mrs Lawson then asked Mr Young (Jedburgh) to offer prayer that his departure might be in peace. This was done. 'Lord,' they prayed, 'let an abundant entrance be now administered to Thy servant into the everlasting kingdom of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.'

'LORD! TAKE ME TO PARADISE,' added the dying saint; and as the sublime petition dropped from his lips, his soul was with Jesus. The simplicity of a lifetime was embodied and embalmed in the last words he uttered.

It is worthy of notice, that, in the *ordinary* course of reading that morning at family worship, the chapter happened to be the 34th of Deuteronomy, where is narrated the death of Moses on Mount Pisgah, with his death and burial in the land of Moab. And the last hymn, also in the ordinary course, which he sung with the family, was the 31st Paraphrase, beginning—

> 'Soon shall this earthly frame, dissolved,
> In death and ruins lie;
> But better mansions wait the just,
> Prepared above the sky.
> An house eternal, built by God,
> Shall lodge the holy mind;
> When once those prison walls have fallen,
> By which 'tis now confined.'

The funeral took place on the Friday after his death; and on the following Sabbath, as has been already noticed, his funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr Thomson, of Coldstream, from these words, 'And devout men carried

Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.' The character of Dr Lawson, given at the close of the discourse (which was afterwards published), is alike forcible and truthful, solemn and eloquent. We quote the last paragraph:—

'It was a fact that "devout men carried him to his burial, and made great lamentation over him." I have never witnessed a funeral at which sorrow appeared more visibly depicted on every countenance. But the grief for his loss was not confined to his immediate neighbours and others who were present at the interment. His death will be long and deeply lamented by all to whom he was known.'

As a sweet voice from the past,—a voice which one might think could only issue from the grave,—we give a letter of sympathy from the old widow of Mr Kidston, of Stow, to the widow of Dr Lawson. The former had gone to Peebles to end her days in peace; and the latter, in fourteen months after this, died in the Lord. We have no reason to be ashamed of these matrons of the early Secession; they were worthy of our fathers.

'PEEBLES, *March* 30, 1820.

'MY DEAR MRS LAWSON,—Though somewhat late in telling you the fellow-feeling that I have with you, it is not because I have not felt the loss you have sustained. The death of your dear husband brought many and keen recollections with it. Mine and yourn were very intimate in their lives; and I entertain the sure hope that they are together in that place, and in the presence of that loved Master whom they both loved so much and faithfully served in the Gospel. However much we may feel their loss, they are both infinitely happier than when here. Intimate and agreeable as was the union between them, yet, from union to Christ, He had a preferable claim to them. He died for them; they served Him; and He has called them to their reward. Ought we to grudge them to Him, or what they enjoy to them? And as

they will not return to us, let it be your concern and mine to be followers of them who through faith and patience are now inheritors of the promises. May His blessing be upon you and your family, who hath revealed Himself as "the Father of the fatherless, and a Husband to the widow."—I am, with sisterly sympathy and affection, yours,

'JANET KIDSTON.'

Appropriately following this grave epistle, is the inscription prepared by her son, Dr Kidston, for the monument which was subsequently erected over the grave of the deceased in the churchyard of Selkirk :—

To the Memory of the

REVEREND GEORGE LAWSON, D.D.,

MINISTER OF THE ASSOCIATE CONGREGATION IN SELKIRK,
AND
PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY UNDER THE ASSOCIATE SYNOD.

HE WAS BORN 13TH MARCH 1749; ORDAINED 17TH APRIL 1771;
APPOINTED PROFESSOR 2D MAY 1787; AND DIED 20TH FEBRUARY 1820,
IN THE 71ST YEAR OF HIS AGE AND 49TH OF HIS MINISTRY.

THIS VENERABLE MAN WAS EMINENTLY DISTINGUISHED
BY GREAT NATURAL TALENTS, IMPROVED BY CONSTANT AND LABORIOUS STUDY;
BY A MINUTE AND EXTENSIVE ACQUAINTANCE WITH SACRED THEOLOGY;
BY SIMPLICITY OF MANNERS AND SINGULAR MODESTY;
AND, ABOVE ALL, BY FERVENT AND UNAFFECTED PIETY.

HIS GREAT ATTAINMENTS AS A SCHOLAR,
AND HIS FIDELITY AS A MINISTER AND A THEOLOGICAL TUTOR,
RENDERED HIS LIFE A VALUABLE BLESSING,
AND HIS DEATH A SEVERE LOSS,
TO SOCIETY AND THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

'THE MEMORY OF THE JUST IS BLESSED.'

A MEMORIAL OF THE AFFECTION AND ESTEEM OF
HIS CONGREGATION AND OTHER FRIENDS.

At the meeting of Synod, in April, the following tribute to his memory was unanimously entered upon the minutes :—

'In recording the decease of the Rev. Dr Lawson, the Synod find themselves called on to express, in their minutes, the peculiar and important obligations which they and the people of their charge are under to the Head of the Church, for the prolonged and valuable services performed by this worthy and venerable member of their body, as their Professor of Divinity; to whom, under God, most of the ministers of this Synod are much indebted for their knowledge of the Gospel of the blessed God, and their qualification for preaching it to their fellow-men; and the impression of whose amiable and venerable character, for piety, for the knowledge of the Word of God, for sacred literature, and for every excellence which can adorn the man, the Christian, and the Professor of Divinity, they wish ever to retain and to cherish, as an excitement to the faithful discharge of the duties of their office.'

It is but due to the memory of Mr Greig, of Lochgelly, to state, that the drawing out of the foregoing resolution was committed by the Synod to him, as one of Dr Lawson's most attached friends. Within three years from this time, Greig, and Husband, and Macfarlane, were gathered also to their people,—these all dying in the faith. Mr Greig's last words remind us of the Professor's. With a voice faltering in death, he said, 'I will soon be in heaven,' and he was there. We cannot wind up these memoirs more appropriately than with the precious letter which this man of God addressed to the widow at Selkirk, when he heard of the death of her husband, and of his own dearest earthly friend :—

'LOCHGELLY, 2*d March* 1820.

'MY DEAR MADAM,—It was with the deepest concern I received the melancholy intelligence of the death of my dear and worthy friend. I sincerely sympathize with you and

your family under this severe bereavement. The loss you have sustained must be felt by you to be great and irreparable, except by Him who is the all and in all of our happiness, and who hath said, He will be a father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow. Your separation from one with whom you enjoyed the sweetest fellowship that can flow from a human being, cannot fail to cast a shade of sadness over the remainder of your days, which can only be removed by your reunion with him in a better world. If the sympathy of the many friends of your dear husband can soothe your griefs, and mingle sweetness with your cup of sorrow, this I am sure you enjoy in the present feelings of many a sorrowful heart; for I know of no person that was more tenderly loved than he with whom it was your honour and happiness to be so nearly connected, or that better deserved to be esteemed and beloved. I need not speak of his excellences to you, who so well knew them, and so long enjoyed the advantages of them. It is with the utmost sincerity I can say, that, after more than fifty years of the most intimate acquaintance with him, I have not known a more excellent person in the course of my life. He was, indeed, a fountain of wisdom and delight to all who had intercourse with him. He was the oldest and the most intimate friend of my life; and, by his removal, this world hath become a much more solitary abode to me. Many happy days have I enjoyed in his company, and I never retired from his society without deriving pleasure and advantage. From the accounts which I had, a few weeks ago, from one from your place, I was flattering myself that, though he was labouring under infirmities, Providence would continue him a while longer in the church below, where he was so usefully employed. But we are ill able to judge what is fit and necessary in the plans of the wise and righteous Disposer of all things; and to His will it becometh us to bow down in holy submission. If his many friends had had their wish, he had lived many years longer to prolong their happiness. But let

us rejoice that he has entered into the joy of his God. If we loved him, why should we not rejoice that he hath gone to the Father. He served his God and Redeemer long and faithfully; he now rests from his labours, and his works shall follow him. The much good seed which was sown by him has taken root in the hearts of many, and I doubt not but it will be bringing forth fruit unto God in this and the successive generations of mankind, till time shall be no more. By his death God has been cutting asunder some of our tenderest ties to this world, and furnishing us with a new motive to set our affections on things above. The friend whom we loved is there, and by his presence has increased the joy of his Lord, and of all its holy inhabitants. We have greater reason than ever to be affectionately mindful of heaven, where so many that were dear to us are collected, and, as it were, looking down upon us and calling us to run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Living by faith on the Son of God, and cleaving to Him under the trials and afflictions of the present life, it is not long when we too will join the society of our pious departed relatives and friends, and enjoy unmingled pleasures with them, without interruption and without end. Though God hath given you cause of grief in taking from you your dear and invaluable companion, yet He hath left you worthy and amiable sons and daughters, to minister to your comfort, and who, I doubt not, will tread with you in the steps of their most excellent and affectionate father. I hope both you and they will be helped neither to despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked by Him. He who hath afflicted you is God, *all-sufficient*, and hath given you His promise, that, when you pass through the waters, He will be with you. In the faith of His promise, cast yourself and your family into His arms, trusting He will perfect what concerns you, and that He will make the present afflicting dispensation work for your good. If you find yourself at

a loss to see how this can be, remember His saying, that what you know not now you shall know hereafter.—I am, dear Madam, yours very affectionately, 'DAVID GREIG.'

I have thus attempted to write the history of a life—of a pre-eminently simple and quiet life,—a life that arose, culminated and set, before the pressure and progress of this febrile era had made literary and pastoral *otium* an impossibility. Lawson was the Enoch of his generation, the Solomon of his tribe, and the beloved disciple of his Church. He walked with God: there was peace in his day, and he taught Christians to love one another. No trumpets are heard, no tournaments are held, and, with perhaps one exception, no fiery spirits are combated in his history. All is tranquil, as early morn in spring when the seed is sowing—hopeful, as fruitful fields when the summer's sun and breeze whiten them for the sickle; and all is golden and gladdening, as an harvest-home when reapers' songs chaunt the ingathering. Such-like was his pilgrimage. And, as memory oft fixes her full eye on the beauties and blessings that enriched and bespangled the past, to quicken gratitude and excite emulation, so is this monument reared, and left, with all its defects, to remind our Church how much she is indebted, for her present position and influence, to the wisdom, piety, and zeal of such a man as George Lawson,—a man who has had no superior in any church, for extent, variety, and depth of learning, for wonderful sagacity, and, withal, for such a majesty of simplicity, such a fascination of meekness, and such a power of godliness as entitle him to be held in everlasting remembrance.

APPENDIX.

The following is a list of ministers who studied at Selkirk, and still survive. We are indebted for it to the Rev. Dr Mackelvie, whose statistical labours have for years been onerous and praiseworthy; and it is to be hoped that he will soon benefit the Church by their publication. Since the list was obtained, five of the names must be erased, viz., Dr Fletcher, of London; Dr Thomson, of Penrith; Dr Thomson, of Coldstream; Dr Newlands, of Perth; and Mr Sandy, of Gorebridge.

The Rev. H. Thomson, D.D., Penrith.
The Rev. A. Thomson, D.D., Coldstream.
The Rev. A. Fletcher, D.D., London.
The Rev. William Brown, M.D., Edinburgh
The Rev. John Johnston, Glasgow.
The Rev. George Sandy, Gorebridge.
The Rev. John Law, Innerleithen.
The Rev. John M'Kerrow, D.D., Bridge of Teith.
The Rev. John Struthers, Hamilton.
The Rev. George Brown, LL.D., Liverpool.
The Rev. A. Scott, Cambusnethan.
The Rev. James Sommerville, Airth.
The Rev. John Jamieson, Douglas.
The Rev. Walter Hume, Yetholm.
The Rev. William Pringle, D.D., Auchterarder.
The Rev. A. Jack, Dunbar.
The Rev. James Harper, D.D., Leith.
The Rev. Ebenezer Johnston, Plean.
The Rev. David M. Inglis, Stockbridge.

The Rev. James Pullar, Glenluce.
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